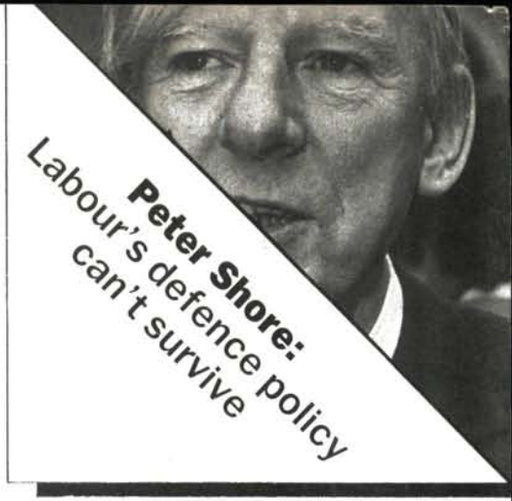
DEC 0 8 1987

NEW STATESMAN
13 November 1987 IR£1.46 US$1.75 By Air £1

ANDERSON COLLEGE LIBRARY
Display Copy



Peter Shore: Labour's defence policy can't survive

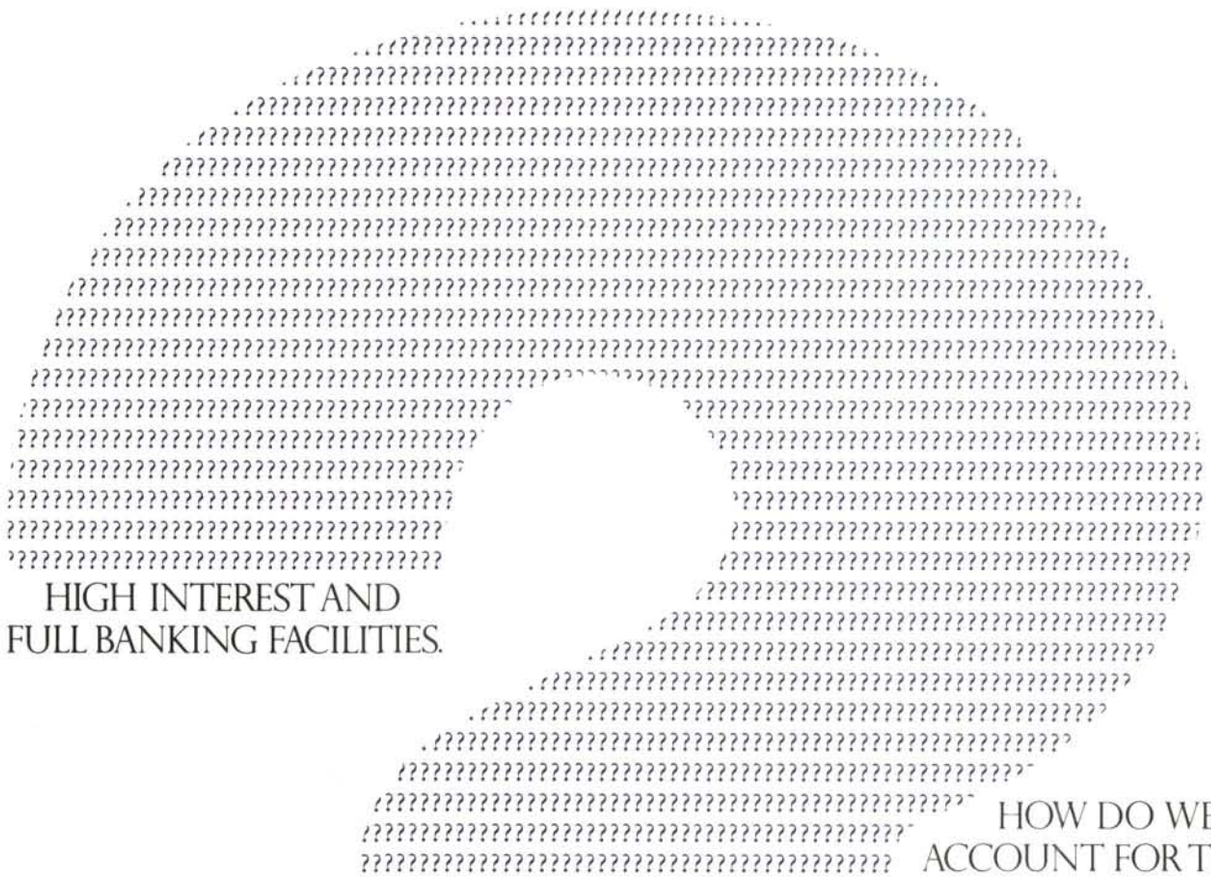
- Mr Baker's comprehensive failure
- Behind the crash
- Pimlott on Enniskillen
- Are letters private?
- Zoo culture
- Early Christians
- Sex murders

TECHNOLOGY IS NOT ALWAYS GOOD FOR YOU

'I am not an enemy of the 20th century but we must retain discrimination'
Alexander Cockburn

Illustration: Chris Duggan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



HIGH INTEREST AND
FULL BANKING FACILITIES.

HOW DO WE
ACCOUNT FOR THAT?

Do you have spare money lying idle in your current account at the end of each month? If you do, you'd be much better off with our BankSave Plus Account which gives you the convenience of a bank current account, and the added benefit of high interest. How? Simple. When you open a BankSave Plus Account with the Alliance & Leicester, you get between 5.75% and 7.25% interest depending on your balance with us. You also get immediate access and full banking services through a joint arrangement with the Bank of Scotland which gives you a cheque book and a Bank of Scotland Visa Card which also guarantees your cheques. You'll never have to worry about transferring funds from your account with us to your cheque book account because we do that for you. So the bulk of your money earns interest until it's needed.* If you're smart enough to want the best of both worlds just pop in to your local branch or send in the coupon for more information.

To: Alliance & Leicester Building Society, Freepost, Hove Park, Hove, East Sussex BN3 2ZU.
(No stamp required).

Full Name(s)_____

Address_____

_____

_____ Postcode_____

ST2

ALLIANCE + LEICESTER

YOU GET A SMARTER INVESTOR AT THE ALLIANCE & LEICESTER.

*UP TO £350 OF YOUR INVESTMENT WILL BE HELD IN YOUR CHEQUE BOOK ACCOUNT AND NOT EARN INTEREST. INTEREST IS NORMALLY PAID ANNUALLY AND RATES MAY VARY. INTEREST RATES QUOTED ARE NET OF BASIC RATE TAX.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW STATESMAN

Vol 115 No 2955 13 November 1987

CONTENTS

FEATURES

Georgina Born: Hamburg Diary 4
Ben Pimlott: Enniskillen & the Anglo-Irish Agreement 5
News 6
Edward Pearce: Arguments from different premises 9
Pauline Asher: Inside good comprehensives 10
Robert Chesshyre: On being a celebrity 12
Elgy Gillespie: J. D. Salinger goes to law 13
Andrew Tylecote: The Poor will bail us out 14
Peter Shore stands up for multilateralism 15
Christian Wolmar on the stump in Wandsworth 17
Peter Hain prods the soft left 18
Donald Sassoon: Labour and Europe 19
Corinna Adam: British justice on trial 20

ESSAY

Alexander Cockburn deprecates word-processors and meets Hitler 21

ARTS

James Hall: New York art 23
Victoria Radin: Russian drama 24
Harriett Gilbert: Comment: The colour of soap 24
Hugo Williams: Television 25
Simon Reynolds: Music 26

BOOKS

Marek Kohn: Bob Mullan and Garry Marvin's *Zoo Culture* 27
Rowan Williams: Early Christians 28
Helen Birch: Killing tales 28
John Spurling: Women artists 29
Gilbert Adair: Georges Parec's *Life* 30
Barbara Burford: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison 30
Richard Deveson: J. P. Donleavy 31
Mark Haworth-Booth: Poem 31

BACKCHAT

Andrew Lumsden: Out to lunch 36
Jean Daniels: First person 36
Stephen Brook: Wine 37
Weekend crossword 37
Weekend competition 38
John Minnion: Take Me to Your Leader 39
Chess: George Botterill 39
This England 39

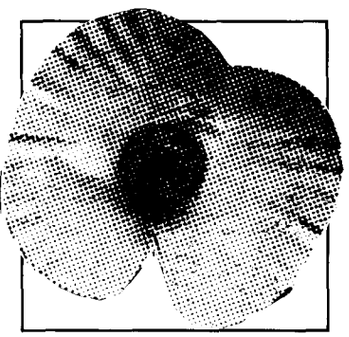
PLUS

Roger Woddis 4
Christian Clark 14
Letters 32

NEXT WEEK

The future of the family is fraught; the future of socialism is not as bleak as some think; *plus* Sarah Benton on New Conservatism and the dissolution of political society

The other island



THERE IS NO reason to doubt the sincerity of the expressions of regret made by Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, over the murder of 11 people at the Enniskillen Remembrance Day ceremony. No tactical or strategic objective is served by it: and the overwhelming objective, to retain the support of a substantial part of the nationalist community — which Sinn Fein did have — has been badly damaged. Sinn Fein sincerely regrets that its long-term aims have been harmed.

The strength of the IRA, in both its military and political manifestations, has been its ability to calculate what best serves these aims. Indiscriminate terror directed against Unionist areas, popular in the early 1970s, has long given way, in general, to more carefully directed attacks on military and police targets. Labour's hard left, sympathetic to the Republican cause, was very successfully wooed in the early 1980s, and extended many valuable platforms to Sinn Fein speakers. A vigorous campaign stressing community and welfare rights has brought Sinn Fein electoral success in local councils in Northern Ireland itself.

Everything the IRA does — mass murder, individual assassination, kidnapping, torture, bank raids, extortion, protection rackets, corruption of public officials, public meetings, written propaganda, political campaigns, standing in elections at every level — is devoted to the single aim of driving the 'British' out of Northern Ireland. Since the majority in the province considers itself British, this means terrifying and/or demoralising that majority into acceptance of an all-Irish state. In pursuit of this hand it continues to demonstrate intelligence and flexibility. It is wholly unassuagable: it will not compromise.

Enniskillen, then, is only surprising in that it reverts to an earlier stage of the campaign: to condemn it as savage, horrible and cruel is a catharsis for British political opinion which, as the Unionist MPs rightly said in the Commons on Monday, they can do without. These expressions over, we — especially we on the left — have some questions to ask.

To some we know the answer. The possibility that the two-year-old Anglo-Irish Agreement would substantially diminish terrorist violence has not, so far, materialised. So far this year, 87 people have died in terrorist incidents in the North, compared with 61 in the whole of last year. It is unreasonable, of course, to expect any 'solution' to a crisis of nearly 20 years' duration to produce short-term peace: but the Agreement was billed as doing so, and on its own showing, it has failed.

We also know that the Unionist and nationalist communities remain, broadly, as distrustful of each other as ever, and that their political representatives have yet to start formal talks on the basis of the Agreement. It is true there has been a softening of Unionist opposition, and a tentative exploration of an agenda for talks (Enniskillen will of course set that back). But such delicate manoeuvres have come and gone regularly over the past two decades, and there is nothing yet to show that the present moves will be any different.

But the harder areas are these. Where does the Anglo-Irish Agreement — which permits the Dublin government to intervene into the administration of law and order in Northern Ireland — lead? Is it a stepping stone to further involvement of Dublin in Northern Irish affairs — or a pragmatic recognition that security can only be improved with such arrangements? And if it *is* the latter, and security does *not* improve, what is the outcome?

Given that the Unionist community sees the Agreement as a stalking horse for republicanism, is it possible to get reform in the large areas of anti-Catholic discrimination which exist, especially in employment? While the future of the status of Northern Ireland is in legitimate doubt, those who face the job of securing necessary and overdue reforms, especially in the practices of the Unionist working class, have a difficult job.

Many on the left believe that the Unionist working class is an undifferentiated bigoted mass — a belief which finds more than an echo when English commentators approach the Northern Irish question. Prejudice exists, indeed: but much more important is the tendency to close ranks against a threat perceived to come from the entire nationalist community — a threat which cannot be removed while their national and cultural identity is kept an open question.

For the Labour Party in particular, this presents a challenge. Many of Ulster's Unionist workers are organised in the British trade union movement. Many wish to vote for a party of the left, and would do so if they had the opportunity. Labour must, in the course of its policy review, examine again its policy on Ireland and consider once more the possibility of organising in Northern Ireland. It will take effort and courage: but Northern Irish politicians of every kind have had to show that over the past 20 years: and Labour would gain great credit, not just in Northern Ireland, for taking a direct hand in our oldest problem.

John Lloyd

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DIARY

Hamburg

On tour with Mike and Kate Westbrook and drummer Dave Barry, to play as soloists with the North German Radio (NDR) Big Band in Mike Westbrook's jazz arrangements of Rossini. Carrying a cello is always conspicuous. Getting onto the terminal bus, an effete W. German businessman eyes me gallantly, weighing up whether to offer to carry my cello. Momentarily, I make to flirt; and then we both let it go. Zooming in closer, the man will have noticed untidy stickers on my cello case, trophies of past work: 'Slits: Backstage Pass', 'Final Solution' (punk ironies), 'Rote Lieder: Festival des Politischen Liedes Berlin/DDR', 'Rock in Opposition'.

This aborted encounter reminds me by contrast of touring, seven years back, with the all-woman feminist music and performance group, FIG. Then, I approached the struggle to get airlines to meet my cello's needs sternly, aggressively. (Cellos are singled out as the only instruments to have a specified fare: half fare. Hence many check-in battles to get the cello on half-empty planes without paying more for it than a bohemian musician's fee.) Now, 'enlightened', fashionably post-feminist and psychoanalysed, I negotiate reasonably and . . . flirt. Nothing gained: the cello still bumps along in the hold.

○

The band is male, white, mostly over 50, and contains some marvellous players. It was a dance music outfit for years until recent inspired management put it to work with jazz composers like Mike and Anthony Braxton. The studio is deeply overmanned. Being a woman in the macho world of amplified sound: first rehearsal Monday morning, and Werner, studio soundman, besuited, authoritative, will not find me an amp ('. . . for cello?'). Impatient to shortcut the endless literal power game played out with male technicians, I call ostentatiously to Mike 'They say there's no amp . . .' Within minutes, *two* bass amps and various effects appear. 'I didn't realise you had a pickup' leers Werner.

○

Egon, the bass trombone, is the band's union rep. Plays, talks and laughs loud: he's Big. We have 10am to 4pm down as rehearsal hours. Six hours become three: every hour on the dot Big Egon yawns, stretches restlessly, finally gets up and tells Dieter, the conductor, reasonably, that it's a break. They sort of negotiate the return time, half an hour later. All out to the NDR cafeteria. The shock of porn, enormous breasts and frozen smiles, staring out from the NDR shop stand outside the cafe, along with cigs, chocs, chewing gum — oral fixation stand. On FIG tours in Germany years ago, we had a stock of running 'sausage jokes', protest against the meat-eating, beer-swilling, cig-smoking, heart-diseased, porn-stocking, phallocentric, heterosexist German culture complex. Kate and I find ourselves a day in saying 'not yet! We musn't begin the sausage jokes yet! . . .' Big Egon sits next to Kate in the lineup. Day one he gets chummy and asks her 'Do you have a boyfriend?' She points primly to Mike, and says she's married to the Bandleader. Next day, while I'm soloing away, Egon elbows Kate and says 'Nice playing! What's her name? Is she married?' Kate tells. 'Nice girl', concludes Big Egon, and calls another coffee break.

○

The NDR cafe at lunchtime reveals a cross-section of women and men similar to BBC and other media canteens, the women different post-feminist types, expressed clearly through style. More expressive than the men's clothes, as though men's politics of style have stood still — the illusion betrayed of a male sexual political shift. These men and their style could date from 15 years back; the women are unmistakably of *now*. Predominant are the high-heeled, coiffed (blonded), tailor-suited, nail-painted, large hoop-earringed. Contrasting with a few extremer dressers: bigger hoops, flat Doc Martens, hair wilder, footless tights under ruched skirts, black'n'red, both more androgynous and more womanly. Two post-feminist syntheses: reaction back to a sharper femininity, in quotes; and post-punk bohemia, retaining elements of radical feminist critique, much tamed. And me? Bejeaned, blonded and . . . yep, behooped.

○

After rehearsals, at dusk, as so often on tour with time to kill in strange cities, I wander and peer into lit-up homes, imagining their routines, passions: voyeuristic, always transient, sensing difference but unable to follow through with any depth of contact. Mirroring the voyeurism and transience of their fascination as audience with me as performer. I pass a young woman on the street who looks very like me, but to whom I cannot speak. My physiognomy would be at home here — ash fair hair, sturdy frame — but for my slight Jewish cast, the reason I'm not German but first-generation British. The 'arbitrariness' is tantalising: but for 'accidents of history' this place would be intimate and not strange. I pass two young Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, also outsiders, and sense with surprise recognition, empathy, a hint of merging.

Shopkeepers are uninterested, barely give me time. I do not buy much, and however well I dress I don't look well-heeled next to the splendid glitter of the German middle class. Round here the local clothes shops are like Browns, Armani. The bakers have 30 kinds of bread. There's a shop that only sells Japanese miniature trees; prices start at £50. Who buys? This is a scale of conspicuous consumption I've only ever witnessed in Manhattan; and this is a suburb. But Hamburg is the kind of organism swelling up in this conjuncture: built on mercantile capital, ancient and new. My dislocation, though, is not so much lack of wealth, but an equally terrifying ancient division: not looking 'right'.

○

Music as property. Two days in, Mike's fretting as to whether NDR will give us a copy of the recordings, since they and the actual scores and parts are all owned by NDR as part of the deal and have to be physically left there. Mike may not get another chance to do this arrangement again. By late in the week, the recording engineers (the music world's natural anarchists) indicate that tape copies may not be a problem.

○

Today, walking homeward, I find myself humming the set. Four days in the tunes and arrangements have lodged inside, a commitment that builds slowly, attachment to the sublime co-ordination of musical lines and players. The thrill of sitting among 25 musicians, brass and saxes blasting out their simple consonant, then intricately diverging, lines, is unique, privileging. An orchestra does not feel like this, in which each player makes a unique contribution: the written part, but also individual technique and musicality combining in improvisations that construct the whole. Against the orchestra's bureaucratic rationality, the big band is a more complex division of labour, an expressive, organic totality. When it comes together, it's like *difference uniting*; the orchestra, by contrast, a hierarchical and repressive consensus. Mike designs his musical space with room for players to explore the range of their (different and multiple) musical personalities. But difference isn't easy.

The concerts arrive and, rather than pleasure, the multiple insecurity of my position threatens — as a woman, soloist, on a non-jazz instrument, playing disruptive, 'avant garde' improvisations. Mike uses me to soar over, take apart, comment upon what's happening below, other musical shapes and moods. Early in the week the band stared and frowned; by the concerts we are listening and responding to each other keenly. They go well.

Georgina Born

Georgina Born is a musician, an anthropologist, and lecturer in communication at Brunel University.

ROGER WODDIS

For the Fallen of Enniskillen

(after Laurence Binyon)

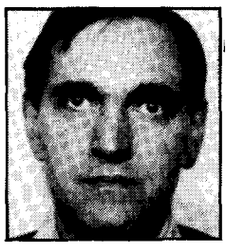
With few forgiving, a people numbed by terror,
Ireland mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, marked down for slaughter,
Fallen as Autumn leaves from the tree.

They went to stand and remember, old and young,
Frail of limb, hopeful of years still to grow.
They were left with anger and loss, or dying,
They fell for reasons only the rabid know.

They shall ask not why, as we that are shocked ask why:
Rage shall not ravage them, nor be their requiem.
At the helpless shedding of tears and in their mourning
We will be one with them.

As the dazed survivors of flame and dust,
Bearing their life-long heritage of pain,
As the divisions planted in the atrocious past,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



BEN PIMLOTT

Enniskillen: soon forgotten unless Britain rethinks its Ulster policy

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to imagine a successful British policy in Northern Ireland, or at least one whose success could begin to be judged for at least a generation. But there can be symptoms of obvious failure, and the Enniskillen massacre was one.

A difficulty facing any British government is deciding upon aims. So far the main conflicts have been within parties rather than between them: disputes between those hoping to edge towards a united Ireland, those wanting to integrate Ulster into the United Kingdom, and those who see no choice but to maintain the status quo. Uncertainty about the secret purposes of successive administrations has caused more political heat than any policy in itself. For all governments, however, the first objective has been to reduce the killing. Enniskillen shows how little progress has been made.

In strictly military terms, the opposite may also be true. It is clear that the bombing has opened up a deep fissure within the IRA. Did the Army Council know and approve? If so, there must be a pretty big split between them and Sinn Fein, whose denunciation of the bombing was as emphatic as it was unexpected. Did a Provo unit act on its own initiative, without the backing of the high command? If so, there are serious problems of indiscipline. Either way, the IRA is not doing well in its own terms. Meanwhile, there have been recent reports in West Belfast of effective police pressure through an increased use of informers.

British newspapers have seized on such evidence and have argued, with London logic, that this time the IRA has gone too far, and Sinn Fein will lose support as a result. Such a conclusion is wildly optimistic and sadly misinformed. The Provisionals are small in number — a hard core of between 300 and 600 according to different estimates — but their capacity to bounce back has repeatedly been shown. In addition, they have a bedrock of passive support which regards the conflict as a liberation struggle, and accepts casualties as a necessary by-product. The fond belief that 'decent Catholic families' will share the Fleet Street sense of outrage misses this point.

There is a rhetoric of regret, anger and determination which always accompanies such events. It is appropriate but — as the next bombing will show — inadequate. Certainly, a get-tough policy at this stage must be what the Provisionals are praying for, to restore unity within their ranks. A show of restraint by the government would do most to bring off the best security coup — the ratification of the extradition treaty in the Dail on 1 December. At the same time, the only sensible long-term strategy is to work on that section of the Catholic population — around a third — that feels enough anger to go on voting for Sinn Fein.

The votes are not significant in themselves. It is the feelings behind them that are at the root of the problem facing any policy-maker in Northern Ireland. British observers, even concerned ones, have tended to regard the Sinn Fein support as ignorant or perverse. That is dangerous, as well as absurd. If the Provisionals are to be isolated within their own community — and they will continue to kill and maim until they are — the reasons why so many poor, working-class people condone what we call murder must be better understood.

SOFTENING THE attitudes of these people was, of course, a primary intention of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, which remains the cornerstone of British policy in the province. How does it now look? There are pluses and minuses. Abroad the Agreement has been seen as a serious attempt at conciliation, and this has helped reduce supplies of money and arms to the IRA. At the same time, the presence of Dublin in Belfast has not displeased the Catholic population on either side of the border: nor has the fury which it has aroused among the Unionists.

On the other hand, the practical impact of the Agreement in the Sinn Fein heartlands of West Belfast has been marginal or non-existent. If Unionists were suspicious because they saw the Agreement as a symbolic step towards a united Ireland, Catholics regarded it sceptically as a gesture without substance. So far the Catholics have been proved right. The supposed aim was to provide regular discussions about the government of the province. But what is the use of discussions that produce no result? Cynics have been saying that jaw-jaw has stimulated far less concrete reform than war-war. The Anglo-Irish Agreement can only be made to work if it is used to tackle the two continuing problems of the province: unemployment and discrimination.

Unemployment on its own is not the only cause of the conflict. When the present troubles started the rate of joblessness in the province was lower than in much of South East England today. Nevertheless, absolute and relative deprivation — lack of money, jobs, skills and prospects — has become the biggest factor in preventing this suppurating sore from healing. In Northern Ireland as a whole, unemployment is now around 20 per cent. Among the Catholic population, according to the Fair Employment Agency, it is more than twice as high. And in the urban wilderness of West Belfast — Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge, Whiterock, Lower Falls — male unemployment is reckoned to be 50 or 60 per cent.

More than in any other part of the United Kingdom, West Belfast has unemployment as a way of life, dominating its culture, humour, attitudes and values. Whether or not the inhabitants have grounds to feel bitter towards those they regard as their enemies is a matter for argument. That they do feel bitter is a political fact, and it is bitterness, fuelled by lack of hope, that produces sympathy for Sinn Fein and a seedbed for the IRA.

But attachment to the militant republican cause also has another aspect. There is a simple formula which holds goods in most parts of the world: economic grievance plus separate national identity equals rejection of legal authority and support for violent protest. The Thatcher government has approached the dual identity problem by seeking, through the Anglo-Irish Agreement, to massage the Catholics. What the government has not done is attempt to turn the Agreement into a vehicle for the promotion of civil rights, which might reduce the Catholic scorn for Protestant and British justice.

WHATEVER view might have been taken at the outset, the Agreement should not now be scrapped. The Unionists can live with it and the Catholics can still gain from it. What is needed instead is for it to be adapted. Reform *is* possible in Ulster — since 1968, electoral abuses have been curtailed, and the Protestants have been deprived of much of their political power. Much of the reform was insufficient and too late, which strengthens the case for speeding up the pace. The aim must be to fight discrimination, principally in employment, and provide jobs in the areas that need them most.

A recent glossy statement of intent on how to change labour recruitment practices has to be followed through. There must also be a proper regional policy. Ideally, tackling the Ulster economy should be part of a UK expansionary programme. Alas, the wrong side won the general election. Nevertheless, given a more pragmatic approach to economic matters of late, the government should be able to see the argument for making Ulster a special case. Throwing large sums of money at the problem has, so far, failed to solve it. But Ulster is a small province, and within it the key populations are heavily concentrated. Throwing, or sensibly investing, even more at a time when the national economy can stand it, may pay political dividends in the future. Labour gave big financial gifts to any plausible millionaire (such as De Lorean) who came along. There is a need not to repeat the same mistake. One positive step would be to use the Agreement to develop economic links with the South.

Within Belfast, Sinn Fein enjoys three kinds of support. There are those who have personal experience of British imprisonment, or are the relatives or friends of present or former inmates. This ever-growing group is unpersuadable. There are those who, in desperation, see Sinn Fein as the only party with the determination to get things done. And there are the young — often aimless and nihilistic — who regard the IRA with a combination of fear and fascination. Both the second and third groups contain people who, in different conditions, might be detached.

Enniskillen will quickly be forgotten, except by the injured and the bereaved. Anybody who imagines that such an event might prove a catalyst for some kind of change lives in a world of make-believe. On the other hand, the latest tragedy could encourage the British (as well as the Irish) to re-think their approach. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is due for review next year. There is still time for London and Dublin to consider carefully the opportunity it provides. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dounreay's widows

AS SHE SPOKE her voice began to tremble. 'Every time I go to my bed I can't sleep because there is always something there to remind me.' As she remembered, she wept. 'It just breaks my heart to think of my husband. He was just 43.'

Jeanie Gillen is a courageous, determined and patient woman. Her husband, Alexander, died of leukaemia in 1962 after he had been exposed to radiation at the Dounreay nuclear plant on the north coast of Scotland. She has been pursuing a claim for compensation from the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) ever since.

She has evidence that Alexander, a crane operator at one of the Dounreay reactors, was accidentally irradiated while he was working an extra shift soon after he started work at the plant in 1958. 'It's been 26 years in the hands of solicitors and I'm absolutely sick of it,' she said. 'But I'm determined not to let them off with it. I'm not worrying about the money but I want to prove that my husband was killed by radiation.'

Now, at last, there is some hope that Jeanie Gillen's long battle may soon be over. The *New Statesman* has learnt that the UKAEA has agreed in principle to a compensation scheme which should benefit the widows of employees who have died of a cancer —like leukaemia — likely to have been caused by radiation received at work. A detailed agreement between the authority and the trade unions is scheduled to be signed before the end of the year.

The scheme will be identical to that already operated by one of Britain's other major nuclear employers, British Nuclear Fuels. This has obliged BNFL to pay out over £500,000 since 1982 to the dependants of 15 employees who died of cancer. At the unions' behest, the BNFL scheme is now being extended to cover workers who fall ill from cancer as well as the relatives of those who actually die. The UKAEA scheme, when it comes into operation next year, will cover both.

Jeanie Gillen's case will be one of the first to be considered under the new scheme, but it will not be the last. According to union sources, there are 'several dozen' cases lined up from all the UKAEA's sites including Dounreay. Last year a study carried out for the UKAEA by the Medical Research Council found a 'significant excess' in the death rate from leukaemia and thyroid cancer among the Dounreay workforce between 1954 and 1979.

There are two other Dounreay cases that have been publicised in the past which could be considered under the new scheme. One is that of Margaret Macdonald whose husband, Donald, died of leukaemia in 1970 after he had been exposed to radioactivity in an incident in 1962. An inquest jury in London returned an open verdict on his death. The other is that of Dorothy McClure whose husband, Frank, died in 1981 from cancer of the stomach and pancreas after he had been contaminated in an alleged 'blow back' of radioactive dust in 1962.

The *New Statesman* has uncovered details of three further Dounreay cases which merit consideration. One is an engineer who died of leukaemia earlier this year shortly after he retired. Another is a worker who died of stomach cancer towards the end of 1985. The third is Neil Campbell, a nuclear scientist who died in December 1981 aged 55. His widow, Sheila, described how he had come home from work unexpectedly one lunchtime in the 1960s to get a new set of clothes. His shirt had been destroyed because it had become dangerously contaminated in an accident. His left wrist had also been irradiated. The cancer that killed him years later started in his left wrist.

After five years of struggling for justice through her husband's trade union, Sheila Campbell has grown weary. She cannot afford the only course that she was told remained open to her — legal action. When contacted this week she had not even heard about the new compensation scheme. 'I know we cannot beat the establishment,' she said. 'I have no wish to drag it out anymore. It's not going to bring my husband back.'

Rob Edwards

White men's new burden

IF MARK THATCHER falls on hard times next year, he will have fewer rights to bring his American wife into Britain than the most destitute Irish citizen will have to bring in his entire family. This sort of irony makes the Immigration Bill, published last week, a ticklish piece of legislation for the government. For the first time, white British men will become directly affected by immigration law.

This is because one of the main proposals is the abolition of Section 1(5) of the Immigration Act 1971, which guaranteed that a man who acquired his British Citizenship or was settled here before 1973 would not be in a worse position by virtue of immigration rules subsequently brought into force. That was challenged in the European Court of Human Rights, where it was held to be sexually discriminatory — because British women were in a worse position than men. With depressing predictability, the government didn't relax the rules for women, but tightened them for men.

The current immigration rules place quite a few restrictions on men who don't benefit from Section 1(5). They have to persuade the immigration authorities that they can maintain and accommodate their wives without recourse to public funds (for example, supplementary benefit). This produces some manifest injustices, where local councils won't let a man move into a larger council flat *before* his family arrives, but the family can't arrive until he has accommodation for them. So far this has only really affected a small number of Bangladeshi families. When the bill becomes law, it will apply to all British men.

This increases the already stark contrast between EEC and British law. An EEC national settled in Britain has an absolute right to bring in his or her spouse, children, parents, grandparents, and dependant aunts and uncles; the new bill doesn't change that. The government may find it hard to explain why it is giving its own citizens fewer rights than those of foreigners.

For British men, the bill will create a huge area of long-term uncertainty about whether or not they can be joined by their wives. The immigration rules can be changed at a moment's notice to impose new criteria for settlement. For example, the future of the 'primary purpose' rule is currently in doubt. (This requires spouses to satisfy an entry clearance officer that the marriage has not been entered into primarily to gain entry to Britain.) Under the new bill it will apply to the spouses of all British men. (One effect of this could be to kill off the Filipino 'mail order brides' business.)

But the Home Office may decide to scrap the rule anyway when it introduces a new set of rules next July; it admits that entry clearance officers don't like applying it, and the courts are gradually whittling away its application. It might bring in a quota system instead. Normally, this would be a fairly abstruse area of law, of interest mainly to members of ethnic minorities. Now white men may be shocked to discover that it concerns them too. In theory, this ought to bring the unjust immigration laws nearer the centre of the political agenda and so into public disrepute; in practice it probably won't.

All this has been well-flagged by the government, during the election campaign and in the Queen's speech. The big surprise in the bill is that it also takes away some rights of appeal against deportation from anyone who has been here for less than seven years. It's hard to see any reason for this change unless it is simply that the government is tired of having to combat anti-deportation campaigns. An even more cynical view is that it could be the one section of the bill that the government will be prepared to drop in order to get the rest of it through.

Jolyon Jenkins

Practicing at home

THE CITIZENS of Norway, friends of liberation struggles the world over, were told an ugly domestic truth about themselves last month. Speaking at the ceremonial dinner on the eve of the opening of parliament, King Olav departed from the usual constitutional pleasantries and surprised observers by stating baldly: 'Our society is on trial. The government needs the widest possible co-operation to deal with the question of racism'.

The King was right to agonise in public. In the recent local elections the issues of immigration and racism were elevated to the same importance as worries about the environment and the economy, helping the ultra-conservative Fremskits party to double its vote to 12.5 per cent and move in from the political margins to become the third largest party behind the ruling Socialists and opposition Conservatives.

Taking courage from this new respectability a pressure group calling itself 'The People's Movement to Stop Immigration took space in the Oslo press demanding repatriation and an end to Norway being a 'social services centre for the world'. Its leader, lawyer Jack Kjuus, warned that anybody denouncing the new movement as racist would be sued. Trade unionists responded by threatening to block the £10 membership fees that Kjuus is inviting 'law-abiding' citizens to giro to him over post office counters.

Recognition of this dark side of Nordic culture surfaced two years ago when a US guidebook to Norway warned black Americans about the danger of racist incidents. After protests the book was altered.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The publishers were wrong to back down says Khalid Salimi, Director of the Anti-Racism Centre in Oslo. He recalls: 'My first day in Norway 12 years ago I was walking down the street when a woman spat in my face shouting "Bloody fucking Pakis". I couldn't understand what she meant, nothing like that had ever happened in my life before. People won't sit next to you in a bus. We get hate mail addressed to "niggers". Inevitably, when my picture appears in the papers, it comes back in the post with red-inked blood stains drawn in'.

Salimi is more tolerant than some of his hosts in understanding the causes of Norwegian racism. 'Many poor people in this country do not receive welfare benefits and I sympathise with their

confusion when they see refugees being given state aid'. His anger is reserved for the Norwegian police. The day I called at his Oslo office he was holding a press conference to protest a police raid in which 13 Gambians had been dragged from their homes in handcuffs, the raids being videotaped. 'When I asked what justification the police had,' he explains, 'they told me it was a training exercise'.

The experience of London dub poet Michael Richardson, visiting Oslo earlier this year, was no better. He was hauled off the street, handcuffed by four police officers, and after being 'interviewed' left the police station with his arm in a sling. His damages case was thrown out for 'lack of evidence'.

Despite this, the Norwegian establishment is reacting to racism with far more vigour than its British counterparts. The counterattack is being led by the Norwegian Red Cross, again with the active support of the Royal Family. Last month Crown Princess Sonia was *elected* as the society's vice-president and immediately went on television to speak against discrimination. Her role in the organisation is far from honorary: she will be heavily involved in a 12-month Red Cross campaign, launched to combat racism.

They will seek to educate opinion under the simple slogan 'Yes', with posters showing happy multi-racial groups of Norwegians. Campaign organiser Lars Kvam explains: 'We were an isolated country until 15 years ago. Then the blacks began to arrive and with them came culture shock. We made mistakes like putting groups of immigrants awaiting decisions on residence into hotels in the mountains. Our rural communities are very conservative and very cautious of strangers — even fellow Norwegians'.

The lack of resources in coping with the arrival of refugees echoes the British experience. For the last nine months 300 asylum seekers have been held on a ship in Oslo harbour. They will have to stay there through the harsh winter until next spring.

Norway's considerable contribution to Third World relief, embattled Nicaragua and the liberation movements of southern Africa far exceeds Britain's declining efforts. Lars Kvam insists 'We are world champions at solving other people's problems — as long as they are a long way away. We must practise at home what we preach abroad'.

Andrew Jennings

Andrew Jennings is a journalist with Granada TV's World in Action.

Ron's Rubicon

IT WILL certainly not be the most important election for Neil Kinnock this year. He lost the one that really mattered in June.

But the result of elections starting next week for the general executive committee of Britain's largest union, the Transport and General Workers, will be of more than passing interest to the Labour leader. For it will almost certainly largely determine the outcome of his bid to re-fashion Labour as the party of the centre-ground over the next few years.

If the hard left regains control — it lost its majority on the policy making body two years ago, and with it Labour's largest block vote, 1.25 million — then the clock could be turned back on the outcome of the party's all-embracing policy reviews, and in particular, the moves to water down the commitment to unilateral disarmament. If, on the other hand, the pro-Kinnock soft left, led by union chairman Brian Nicholson, retains control then the Labour leadership can breathe more easily.

Tony Benn's socialist revival meeting in Chesterfield last month attracted widespread publicity: but its impact on Labour's policies in the next election will be nil. Mr Kinnock will see to that. But the TGWU elections, for which nominations close next Monday (16 November), will attract little or no publicity and will prove vitally important for the Labour leadership. Crude though it is, the huge TGWU vote stills plays a crucial role in party policy.

It played a pivotal role in the hard left's advances between 1979 and 1981. Without it the constitutional changes would not have gone through. Now Neil Kinnock will not be able to move to the centre without the block votes to head off the hard left.

The narrowness of the soft left's victory two years ago, giving them a 21 to 18 majority, shows just why the hard left believes it can recapture the jewel in the crown of Labour's power politics. It will be working particularly hard to unseat Brian Nicholson whom they accuse of treachery for leaving their ranks in the internecine wars on the left over the union chairmanship, and who should have succeeded Moss Evans as general secretary.

It was Nicholson, a burly Cockney dockers' leader who would not look out of place in an episode of *Minder*, who used his crucial casting vote to deliver the union executive's support for Kinnock's ill-thought out 'one member, one vote' plan in the summer. That tied General Secretary Ron Todd to supporting the policy at the biennial conference in July, which in turn produced a vote in support of the plan.

Despite his unpopularity with his former colleagues, Nicholson will be a hard man to unseat in the branch-organised workplace balloting which starts in January. He has taken the precaution of making sure his own preferred candidate, Ken Read, and not Ron Todd's choice of Barry Camfield, has been appointed the new London regional secretary.

The outcome of the election, based on the mood of the biennial conference and the feelings of the union's 11 regional secretaries, *should* result in another narrow victory for the soft left. At the July conference, without even campaigning, the right came within 40 votes of overturning the policy of unilateralism — the left's main article of faith, established by Frank Cousins 30 years ago. That little noticed move showed which way the wind is blowing.

Nicholson believes everything is now up for grabs if the TGWU is to help Labour win the next election. General Secretary Ron Todd still insists that unilateral disarmament is his personal Rubicon which he will not cross. If Nicholson is still chairman when the new executive meets in March, Mr Todd may have to start thinking seriously about getting his feet wet.

Tom Condon

Tom Condon is industrial editor of Today.

The fragmentation of German protest

WE ARE witnessing an upward spiral in violence accompanying political protest and policing actions in West Germany. The murder of two policemen and the wounding of others at Frankfurt airport earlier this month during a banned demonstration is the latest instance of a trajectory which began with the crushing to death of a leftist under the wheels of a police water cannon during an anti-fascist demonstration in Frankfurt in October 1985.

Three principal factors seem to be involved:

First: The policing of demonstrations has become increasingly restrictive since the Kohl government came to power. This is less a matter of new legal measures than of police tactics: it is now more difficult to exercise the right to demonstrate. Yet if the purpose is to reduce the risk of disorder, then these tactics have been counter-productive. The hard line may have discouraged some, but the main result has been to provoke a greater militancy and a greater willingness to risk illegality. At the same time the police actions have been inconsistent and there's been an aimlessness about the government's response. The watchwords which served against the anti-authoritarian movement and terrorism — the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

threat from the East, the need for strong democracy after the weakness of Weimar — have become unconvincing and irrelevant.

Second: The mass social movements of the early '80s — peace, anti-nuclear power, housing and urban space — have shrunk. Some of the energy has instead gone into a revival of the autonomists (a diffuse series of libertarian networks characterised by what might be termed 'neighbourhood syndicalism' and a strong anti-imperialist commitment) and a variety of overlapping direct action groups. The last two years have seen a considerable increase in attacks on power pylons, the property of companies participating in the construction of nuclear power stations or trade with South Africa, computer installations connected with military research, biogenetic research laboratories and so on. One feature shared by the autonomists, the direct action groups and their supporters is a deep hostility to the Green Party.

Third: The Green Party itself has suffered from the ebbing of the social movements. Without the wave of mass activity which helped launch it, the party's attempt to establish an effective parliamentary presence has distanced it from much of the radical opposition. It has lost the ability to act as the focus for dissent and action. The Greens have been squeezed on two sides — by the constraints of party politics and by the disaffiliation at its roots.

Given these factors, it is difficult to believe there's much hope of a way out of a spiral of violence in the near future. The most important block to any improvement is that the Conservative-led government is likely to continue placing individual reliance on changes in policing in order to regulate fundamental social and ecological questions.

The Greens are being subjected to fierce criticism for their supposed and actual relationships to extra-parliamentary protest. Paradoxically, the party may benefit from having to concentrate its energies on preserving the area of democratic freedoms despite pressure from the Right to limit them following the airport killings.

Martin Chalmers

If the caption fits
No 43

With the channel tunnel share offer set to recruit more gullible shareowning democrats, it's time to run this graphic illustration of the *entente cordiale*. Are Thatcher and Mitterrand indicating the margin by which French and British ends of the tunnel will fail to meet in the middle? The best caption, thinks, or speech bubble wins a £10 book token. Entries here by 23 November.

Winner: No 41

Dempster (turning away): 'Sorry, I'm no good at faces. Tony who?' (*Margaret Rogers, Sheffield.*) Runner up: Lord Snowdon: '. . . and the Duke of York likes Marmite on his soldiers.' (*Monica McCorry, Edinburgh.*)

More fiddled figures

THE GOVERNMENT appears to have quietly backtracked on a commitment to social security claimants to compensate them for their compulsory contributions to domestic rates.

When the Social Security Act 1986 comes into force in April next year, everyone will have to pay a fifth of their rates, regardless of their income. This is part of the government's grand plan (which will culminate in the poll tax) to stop people voting Labour in local elections. Under the present system, there is a rates contribution in housing benefit. In the case of council tenants, this goes directly to the council. Private tenants already get cash.

Just before the election, the government relented and said that income support (which will replace supplementary benefit) would be increased to take account of the new rates bills. Claimants would each get the average that they would all be liable to pay.

At the end of last month, the government came up with the figures. It said that single claimants aged 18-24 would get £1.00 a week towards their rates, and older claimants, couples and single parents would get £1.30. It has produced figures for different categories of claimants which list the total income support they will receive, which *includes* the rates element.

But these show that what the government has given with one hand it has taken away with the other. The basic allowance has been *cut* (in real terms). In November 1985, the DHSS said that 18-24 year old single claimants, for example, would be getting £24.00 under the new scheme. Now it says they will get £26.05. Since £1.00 of this is supposed to be for their rates, it means an increase of only £1.05 — 4.4 per cent. That is less than the rate of inflation since 1985, so is really a cut.

Parliament debates the figures this Thursday (12 November). It might like to persuade John Moore to come clean. ●

Come on down, the idea's right

THE GREAT autumn sale of British socialism is on. From last weekend until the Christmas buying season takes over, there will be unique opportunities to shop around for new political offers as well as quite a few second-hand items.

7-8 November, The Alternative to Trade Wars Conference, Polytechnic of North London (see Donald Sassoon, p19). Internationalism will be the trend setter on the left this season and this was its first display. Timely chance to say 'I told you so' about the stock market crash though still a profound British scepticism towards stabilising currency rates through the EMS. The Organiser, Frances Morrell, out of her ILEA confines, is looking to recast the Alternative Economic Strategy she and Francis Cripps drafted for Tony Benn back in the '70s. Nothing to do with the Labour Party as such, though Bryan Gould helped open the conference and Larry Whitty, Labour's General Secretary, closed it. No German Greens, though there was a Dutch one; and Luciana Castellina, elegant Italian MEP and French socialist Paul Hermelin, were two of the Europeans prepared to pay their way to speak at the conference.
On offer: A chance to face up to the changed structures of international trade (including in finance) and work out what a socialist strategy would be.
Prize thought: Much of the left doesn't recognise that the days of the nation state are over, that Britain is a *post*-imperial power and that it can't 'save' the Third World.

10 November, Improving Local Services, Olympia. Organised by the TUC. Major repackaging of trade unions in local government with consumers to create new alliance of producers and users. A TUC initiative also sponsored by National Consumer Council, the Policy Studies Institute, the Association of Direct Labour Organisations and others. Speakers included Dr Tessa Blackstone, Usha Prashar of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Donald Macintyre, political editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*.
Sales pitch: (TUC press officer): 'Yes, it is very much a new venture for us'. (Mick Paddon, ADLO): 'What makes the difference between a good and bad local service is listening to the people who use the service, direct contact between users and providers to short-circuit the bureaucracy, and a clear policy statement about the service.'
Prize thought: It's quality that counts.

14 November, Left Alone: Can the Opposition Realign? Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre. Organised by LINK, Liberal Party 'network' which aims to promote ideas and strategy beyond immediate demands of party politics. Speakers include Ken Livingstone, Ben Pimlott, John Lloyd, Sheila McKechnie and Simon Hughes with thoughts on realigning the left inside and outside parliament. Last season's idea with new input from Liberals anxious not to be swept into centre party conventions as merger

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

approaches. (No wet Tories and only one SDP speaker.)
Sales pitch: (Duncan Brack): 'It's striking how much co-operation there is between Labour and Liberals on actual policy issues like housing and the environment. No, this co-operation doesn't take any political form — that's why we're having the conference.' A formal electoral pact will be discussed but most think it's very unlikely indeed.
Prize thought: 'The left' must cross party boundaries — and include Liberals.

14 November: Out of Apathy: 30 Years of the New Left. St Cross Building, Oxford. The Oxford University Socialist Discussion Group, mostly overseas post-graduates, says organiser Seth Moglen, meets to pay homage to the golden oldies — and identify where they went wrong. Speakers include Arnold Wesker, Raphael Samuel, Stuart Hall, Robin Blackburn and Clancy Sigal.
Sales pitch: The New Left 30 years ago did have intellectual successes but it was very academic and high-brow and as a socialist movement it petered out. We want to take stock of what it achieved, not just look back.
Prize thought: 'The New Left was very largely a sexist movement.'

14 November: Labour Co-ordinating Committee AGM, Camden Town Hall. Struggling with a definite sense of being last season's grouping now that the 'soft' left is more dominant in the Labour Party and the LCC's Scottish bastion is less energetic.
Sales pitch: Vote on whether Ken Livingstone should be on the committee.

14-15 November: Communist Party 40th Congress, Hammersmith Town Hall. Members only. Party heads just back from Moscow will renew the CPGB's friendly relations with Soviet Union after a 20-year stand-off. Also up for discussion — a new edition of the CP's programme, 'The British Road to Socialism'. This season's struggle is less with the Stalinists than determined efforts to confine the party to the basement of used and unsellable stock.

14-15 November: Labour Party Women's Conference, Blackpool. No hard sell for this one which stays half-hidden on a back shelf. It will 'focus on campaigning' — a hope, perhaps, that the bitter conflict between the trade union women and Women's Action Committee has gone away.

21-22 November: CND national conference, Hackney. Can unilateralism survive Gorbachev, INF talks and a third Labour defeat?

28 November: Socialism in the '90s, Cardiff, Labour Party of Wales. Organised by Andrew Davies to encourage Welsh Labour Party members to 'think afresh'. But colleague Jon Vaughan Jones says firmly that 'basic principles' are not up for change, and that the party in Wales doesn't go in for the luxury of 'theological discussion'.

5 December: Beating the Blues, South Bank Polytechnic. Organised by the Fabian Society, as the large chain takes up the product (and product name) first launched in the alternative shops (viz *Marxism Today*). First national Labour Party group to go outside party boundaries for speakers, ideas and customers.

Sarah Benton

POLITICAL SKETCH

Arguments from different premises

Edward Pearce

JUST AS one was looking forward to writing with no great measure of solemnity about the Smith Lawson economics debate suddenly, with Enniskillen, we are conducting a memorial service of our own.

Such occasions are difficult to assess. 'The House at its best' can be anodyne and self-regarding. But it would be stupid not to give credit to a string of official speakers — Tom King, Kevin McNamara from Labour's front bench, Robert Rhodes James who speaks well for many troubled Tories and John Hume with his fine sense of what is apt and general felicity in melancholy. But what truly shines out is the twisted rainbow of opinion representing several sorts of English and Irish opinion.

In one sense Rhodes James got it wrong, though with the best intentions: 'The agony of Enniskillen is our agony' he said. Candidly, it isn't. The British are of course genuinely shocked and disgusted, in a contemptuous way, at what has been done. The bomb was heard by them but it didn't blacken their faces.

When the members for Ulster speak — three kinds of Unionist and John Hume — it is a different sort of language. Sometimes they are blindly and crudely obsessive about a single piece of diplomacy — the Anglo-Irish agreement — which a succession of them spoke of as if it had been the inspiration of the explosion. Sometimes they called for measures which the government is not going to bring in — the death penalty, identity cards, martial law and perhaps more realistically an end to the 50 per cent remission available to political offenders.

But above all, they are bitter. 'We have had sympathy for 19 years and it is ringing hollow' said William McCrea. 'The people of Ulster,' said Harold McCusker, 'are just as cynical as they were before. When the ritual is over and the dead have been buried, things will go on as they have before'. Roy Beggs quoted the words of the mother of an Enniskillen victim wounded by the IRA once before. 'They got him this time' she had said, needing no more words.

We don't share the agony of Enniskillen because it is a continuation of a long, dull, immiserating state of pain of which we English have had only a few jagged stabs. Clifford Forsyth, a quiet man from South Antrim, encapsulated perfect despair memorably. 'I have found this House wanting. It is not able to restore to the people of Northern Ireland their citizenship . . . The real tragedy is that eleven people are going to be buried and then later more people are going to be buried!'

That is the situation in Northern Ireland and no amount of generously expressed commiseration will comfort the Ulster protestants. They feel a huge, lonely resentment almost against the world.

Sydney Smith said of two women shouting abuse at one another from their respective doorsteps: 'Those two ladies will never agree. They are arguing from different premises'. Behind Mr King's words and the strong 'no flirtation with the bomb and the ballot box' words of Kevin McNamara, is an assumption that despite practical hitches, like the incompetence (and perhaps sheer terror) of the Garda and the conniving unscrupulousness of Charles Haughey, the Republic is a good thing, utterly to be distinguished from armed nationalism and to be cultivated as an ally. For Ulster protestants the Republic, the constitutional Catholics of the North and the man who set Sunday's fuse are a blur.

Labour and Conservative politicians share the view that the Republic of Ireland is less than foreign, the province of Northern Ireland less than a true part of the United Kingdom. They are by no means necessarily wrong but this difference runs like a geological fault through all understanding of the everlasting conflict.

> ***'Ulster has a propensity to remember — regular deaths in ones and twos keep it in no need of any special gift of recall'***

Rumours may go round that internment is no longer unthinkable, but it won't happen and none of the acts of war for which James Kilfedder called will be implemented. Ulster has a propensity to remember anyway, but it has regular death in ones and twos to keep it in no need of any special gift of recall.

Tom King stand in the middle of all this, a man liked, tolerated and not much regarded. He also has an earnest courtesy, intended to sooth, successful only in deepening frustration even further. The Ulster members would welcome an avowed opponent whose contempt for and indifference to them was self-proclaimed. The fact that British troops have been in the province for almost a generation, that we spend money there in a style to make the US Treasury look frugal, makes no impression. The Ulster protestants feel disregarded and despised and they dare the mainlanders to come clear with them.

The Enniskillen bomb has official Britain showing Ulstery sympathy and attention, and all the quarrelling voices of that province saying 'so now you've noticed us and spoken kind words. What is *that* worth and how long will it last?' I spoke of a rainbow of opinion; that goes too far. This is a monochrome rainbow with no dove in sight. As for the British, they express their sorrow and recall that Ulster is like death and taxes, and involves both. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moral principles and gentlemanly conduct

PAULINE ASHER *argues that government proposals for schools will not support the good and may encourage the bad*

FINDING FAULT with comprehensive schools is a national sport. From the tabloid to the academic press, the focus is on failure. David Reynolds' *The Comprehensive Experiment*[1], for example, brilliantly analysed why comprehensivisation had failed in one Welsh authority and from this argued the failure of the system at large. Examples of bad practice abound: but where are the examples of good practice? Was it really necessary for Baker to fly to the USA to observe high standards in a maintained school? It is now ten years since the Inspectorate published *Ten Good Schools*[2] — haven't they seen another ten yet?

No one — or almost no one — denies that good comprehensive systems exist. But how are they established and how recognised? Baker thinks the answer in both cases is simple: in the first, dismantle the LEAs by financial devolution, opting out and 'open' enrolment; in the second, test children regularly and publish the results.

Regular testing has, predictably, aroused liberal fury. This is in part because of the possible effects of the tests themselves on the curriculum — which will be narrowed — and the pupils, who will be discouraged or made complacent. Another objection is that such tests cannot measure the success of what the school is 'really for'. The tradition that schools have as their main function something other than the imparting of learning is strong in Britain (at Rugby, Arnold placed it third, after 'Christian and moral principles and gentlemanly conduct'); but prize days nonetheless focus more on cleverness than goodness and niceness.

The tradition of fostering the nice and the good is crucial to comprehensive schools where the able and unable cannot ignore one another's existence, and where the school must 'find ways of valuing all its pupils' in the words of Christine Gilbert, head of Whitmore High School, a successful comprehensive to which we shall be returning. Hence the emphasis in many comprehensives on practical courses for the academically weak, school steel bands, community service and so on.

This attitude has led to much that is admirable: there is little doubt that the national curriculum threatens many valuable and valued courses designed for particular groups in particular schools. But it is an attitude which can also disguise a lazy or arrogant refusal to be evaluated on any grounds. The fact is that there are good schools and bad schools, and that their intake is *not* the whole story in determining their results: some schools do better by any standards than others. Delinquency rates, for example, vary from school to school to a degree not wholly explicable by social context. But teachers are not keen on taking responsibility for their pupils 'gentlemanly' conduct outside school, nor is it likely that all schools would be willing publicly to announce and defend their attendance record.

At present, at any rate, exam results are the only publicly available test of schools' and local authorities' efficiency and have therefore been much used to this end.

Different ways of learning

Just how unfair is this? Rutter's classic work on school effectiveness *Fifteen Thousand Hours*[3] shows that 'schools which have high levels of attendance and good behaviour also tend to have high levels of exam success'. (Libertarians for whom 'good behaviour' smacks of regimentation and oppression may prefer to focus strictly on truancy rates — the perfect example of voting with one's feet. Furthermore it seems that comprehensive schools whose 'O' level results are good also have fewer Easter leavers. The Easter leaving rate is an index of the satisfaction with school of those 16-year-olds who have no academic prospects. It varies, in different schools, from an insignificant number to 75 per cent of children old enough to do so. Unfortunately, the DES does not collect Easter leaving statistics, so they cannot be used as a basis for comparing schools or authorities. But figures *are* available which show that the schools where able children are achieving good examination certificates are also those where non-academic children feel sufficiently valued to remain pupils beyond the legal minimum time-span. Seeing children as 'individuals with . . . different ways of learning different things', to quote Mrs Gilbert again, benefits both the week and the strong.

If we allow exam results to stand, then, as a temporary, rough-and-ready proxy for successful schools, where are Britain's successful schools and how are they organised? Scattered and varied — but apparently concentrated in some areas more than others. Harrow Education Authority, for instance, appears to have more than its share.

Since 1983 the Department of Education and Science has made available a 'league table'[4] of LEA examination results. In its crude form, this is little more than a league table of economic privilege: it is no surprise and no credit to Surrey that its pupils gain more 'O' levels than Newham's. By adjusting the figures to allow for economic, social and ethnic factors one can produce a more revealing order. In the most sophisticated analysis — produced at Sheffield University — Bromley plummets from ninth to ninety-sixth of 96 English authorities. (Bad news, this, for the 'magnet schools' lobby: Bromley has long deliberately divided its schools into the good, the bad and the utterly ignored.) Slice the figures as you like, however, Harrow remains at, or close to, the top.

How has this been achieved? Is Harrow a good education authority or a chance conglomeration of good schools — all fully comprehensive since 1974 — or is this a sinister accolade, achieved at the expense of its pupils' non-intellectual needs or unexaminable capacities? I have visited Harrow schools and talked to heads, teachers and education officers. On this basis, and with ten years' comprehensive school teaching experience in London and Manchester, I believe it is a good authority and that there is little reason to believe that its schools harmfully over-emphasise examinations.

Harrow is, of course, true-blue Tory country. Unfortunately this does not seem to have persuaded Kenneth Baker to consider it as a possible model of good practice. Had he done so, he would have found plenty to challenge his belief in the withering away of LEAs. *None of the present Baker proposals reflects current practice in Harrow.*

Baker, for example, believes that by permitting opting-out, publication of test results and 'open' enrolment schools can be set against one another in healthy competition. Harrow conversely has always aimed at 'parity of esteem' for its First and Middle (5-12) and High (12-16) schools. Such aims are seldom fully realised and some schools in the area are under, others over-subscribed but the disparity is less than in most areas and it is hard to imagine damaging disputes like the Dewsbury affair happening here.

No friends of the earth

Nor is Harrow Education Authority merely a bulk-buying organisation for the cheap procurement of exercise books as Baker appears to envisage LEAs becoming, but an active and interventionist body. It is a high-spending authority with much expenditure decided centrally. All the schools' computers, for example, were recently changed from BBC to Nimrod — to howls of protest from some teachers. ('They just don't want to learn new tricks,' said an education officer cheerfully.) All schools have a librarian, again a centrally decided policy. The authority also appears more interventionist than most in situations where a teacher is considered inadequate; most such teachers appear to 'shape up or move on' with some alacrity. Notwithstanding, employee satisfaction, as measured in staff turnover, is very high and there are good relations between schools and the Education Office. At first I found this harmony slightly surprising. Teachers and their unions automatically resent any singling out for criticism of any one of their number — and it is certainly a fact that a poor teacher can be transformed by a good school and that there are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

schools which would drag down Socrates. Every profession, though, has its failures and some check on the quality of services in the public sector is essential. Whatever they may say publicly, most conscientious professionals do not wish their colleagues to get away with murder, and might, under the right circumstances, agree that what is needed is not less but more intervention and criticism from advisors.

The nature of the criticism, though, is obviously crucial. There is little evidence that schools or teachers benefit from strong political guidance from local authorities — neither Brent nor Hereford and Worcestershire (where, gossip goes, a 'Friends of the Earth' carsticker put paid to one teacher's prospects) are especially happy or successful places. A good authority, like a good teacher, will help those in its care to develop appropriately, which need not always mean directing the path of development.

Non-directive support can be seen in the parity of esteem accorded to very different schools by Harrow. Whitmore High School is a school with a predominantly working-class intake: if its catchment area is not, like some inner cities a moonscape of despair, it is by no means dream suburbia. The school buildings are no more attractive, resembling calcified Nissen huts connected by concrete-floored corridors; the children harmonise with their environment, interpreting the uniform 'guidelines' (grey, black or white clothing in sober styles) so as to produce an impression of a demented funeral — a visual effect equally distant from the cherry anarchy of a primary school's primary coloured clothes and the military homogeneity of a public school.

Whitmore, however, is a successful school by almost any standards: attendance, local esteem, staff satisfaction are high; evidence of bullying, vandalism and indiscipline rare. Exam results, too, are good although it is noticeable that the head, Mrs Gilbert, invited to talk about her school, does not find this an interesting topic on which to dwell. She is, however, expansive on the importance of integrating remedial and second language education into the mainstream, on mixed-ability teaching and on the benefits that have accrued to the whole school by the admission of a number of 'special needs' pupils, whose presence in the classroom enabled even the more defensive and traditional staff to admit support teachers in their lessons. Whether the full integration of those children can continue if Baker forces the school to increase its intake is not clear. 'Special' children and in-class support teachers, like practical and oral work, all require space to flourish and it seems unlikely that Whitmore could continue its programme for the '80s with the numbers considered suitable for its buildings in the '70s. Nor is there much reason to believe that the school's exam record or its pupils' needs will be better served when the national curriculum enforces the study of a foreign language and makes a luxury, 'ninth choice' subject of its popular Religious Studies course.

If Harrow is proud of Whitmore, it is equally so of its more obvious showpiece — Nower Hill School. Unlike Whitmore, this school is adapated to its prosperous Tory background in some very obvious ways. Competition, good management, publicity, fulfilling clients' expectations are all watchwords here. Competition, however, means competition with the independent sector and there is no suggestion that the school's management team (whose in-service training, incidentally, has come in part from Express Diaries) are shouting for extra financial control. The Head speaks of positive support from education officers in a small borough where 'you know the person at the other end of the phone'. Nor is publicity, here, concerned only with exam results — though these bear comparison with those at many selective schools. The school tries to ensure that every noteworthy pupil achievement — whether in roller-skating or chess — is known through the school and reported in the local press. This is a stress on excellence but without elitism for its own sake: mixed-ability teaching continues to 16 in some subjects.

Sticks and carrots

None of this is supported by the Baker proposals. More to the point, there is nothing in the present proposals to encourage the spread of good practice from successful to unsuccessful schools. Doubtless this is, as suggested above, partly because the elements that make a school or authority successful are so hard to isolate and imitate: tertiary systems, mixed-ability teaching and so on can be seen succeeding and failing in equal measure. Some approaches, such as, say, the relative downgrading of pastoral activity, which work in Harrow might not work in Brent.

But generalisation is not impossible. Successful schools are schools that promote good teaching, which is not only the spontaneous generation of a mysterious alchemy but also the end-product of cohesive, well-led departments working together to produce appropriate syllabuses. Successful schools have staff who are involved in policy-making and implementation (48 out of 58 full-time staff recently joined a weekend course at Whitmore), not staff who complain in the same breath of being kept in the dark *and* of being asked to stay after school for a meeting.

Baker is seeking to generate these improvements by the use of 'Directed Time' — a requirement that teachers fill timesheets demonstrating that they have spent 1,265 hours working 'on site' during the year. To feel convinced that this will improve matters one would need never to have sat through a poorly chaired meeting, watching minutes ticking away to the accompaniment of random grumbles. Yet sticks as well as carrots *are* necessary: the threat of closure can demoralise a school but has been known to concentrate the minds wonderfully, as has appropriate intervention by advisors and inspectors.

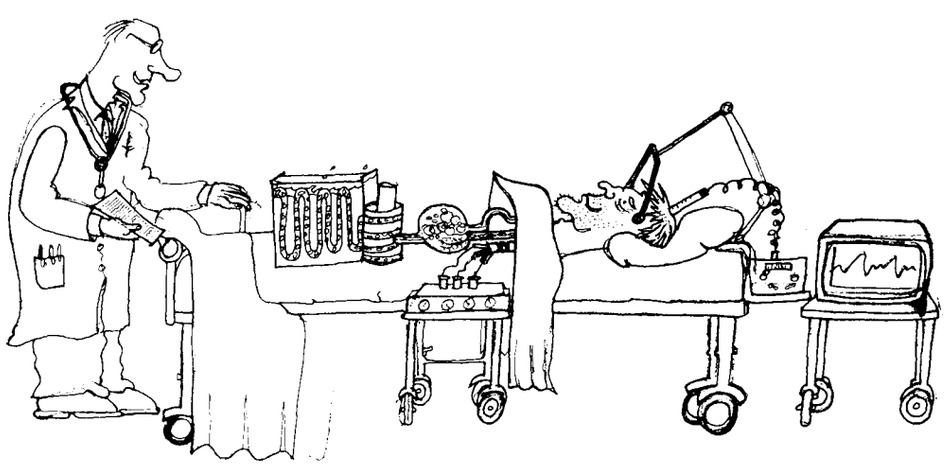
While there is no evidence that a particular approach works everywhere, there is evidence that an agreed, school-wide or department-wide policy on such issues as homework and punishment is essential. This means, in turn, a coherent appointments policy: without this, appointments may be made which, excellent in themselves, neutralise each other. Perhaps it is unfair to suggest that, by handing over to school governors the right to appoint staff (as under the terms of the 1986 Education Act) this danger is increased; too many professionals (heads and advisors) are incompetent appointers to have the right to insist that they are better than the amateurs. But surely the right place to start would have been with *how* to make appointments, not *who*?

Good schools are supported in their objectives by good local authorities — and *local* here should be taken as descriptive; good local authorities are a part of a community and aware of its needs. Local authorities can do much to help or hinder education and the task is not to disband them but, where necessary, to change them. Surely the government is right in saying that there should be more openness and accountability in education, but wrong in believing that this can be achieved simply through testing the children. In any case, this is unfair: it is not their fault that things have gone wrong, and only poor teachers give the whole class a test in order to spot the few skivers.

There is accumulating evidence as to which authorities are succeeding, and which failing and it is high time for the politicians to take a look at what is succeeding and say how they are going to make it more widely available. Provided, of course, that a role model does not become a straitjacket. Whatever may be the case with families, every happy school is happy in its own way; it is the unhappy schools which have a dreary, graffiti-ed grumbling sameness. □

1. Reynolds David and others, *The Comprehensive Experiment*, Falmer Press 1987.
2. Her Majesty's Inspectorate [Matters for Discussion], *Ten Good Schools*, HMSO 1977.
3. Rutter, Michael and others, *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, Open Books 1979.
4. Gray, John & David Jesson; Exam Results and Local Authority League Tables in 'Education & Training UK', Policy Journals 1987.

Pauline Asher is Head of English and Drama at Abbots Bromley School, Staffs.



"Ah! Mr Pailey . . . you're conscious . . . now I have some good news, and some bad news . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEDIA

The deflation of Walter Mitty

Robert Chesshyre

EVERY JOURNALIST should write a book: not just for the discipline — though it *is* salutary for those who pursue such an episodic trade to be compelled to concentrate consistently — but for the unusual experience of finding oneself on the other side of the footlights.

I had been looking forward to promoting my book for a great many years before I actually sat down to write one. The Walter Mitty in us never fantasises about the long hours in front of the blank sheets of paper (my dreaming days preceded word processors), but finds no difficulty in becoming a literary lion.

The feast was moveable, though most often in those far-off days it would be a drunken, hedonistic tour of America in the footsteps of Dylan Thomas. What was always taken for granted was that the world sat up and took note, and, from then on, nothing would ever be quite the same again.

I have just finished a mini-promotion of my recent book — *The Return of a Native Reporter* — which has left me marginally deflated. Biologically incapable of having a baby, I'll accept one woman author's view that a writer's mood on finishing a book is something like post-natal depression.

No wild excesses on the campuses of American colleges; not even Andy Warhol's 15 minutes on a national TV chat show; one BBC Radio Two interview programme told the publishers the book was 'too controversial' — I was occasionally nasty about Mrs Thatcher — which shows just how craven Auntie has become.

But one rapidly becomes adept at turning every setback to one's advantage. Could we justify 'Banned by the BBC' on the paperback dust-jacket? Tyne Tees TV pulled out — as I was on my way to Newcastle — on the grounds that my reporting of the north-east was too 'romantic'. Considering what flak I was getting at the time for being too brutal, it was a bizarre judgment, but did that qualify as a banning?

Being banned by the government as *Spycatcher* was would, of course, have been the ultimate guarantee of sales success. I had to be content with an attack in a full-blown editorial in the *Sunday Times*, which began 'Britain's intelligentsia has become the lost tribe of the 1980s'. This was immensely flattering, especially as I was in distinguished company, and stood accused of a lifestyle based on the Groucho Club and Channel 4. We gathered, readers were told, at our 'favourite watering holes where (even in such supposedly hard times) the Montrachet flows freely, to exchange anecdotes on how the country is going to the dogs.'

I WAS beginning to get the message; that, in these stirring times, there was no room for moaning minnies. Obviously no one, as my colleague Neal Ascherson pointed out in the *Observer*, was to be allowed to disturb the prevailing upbeat mood music of the sort favoured by authoritarian regimes the world over. We should be waving our Union flags, not skulking in back streets reporting on the condition of the less fortunate.

Almost no publication of the right — with the honourable exception of the *Daily Telegraph* — reviewed the book, confirming much of what I had been trying to say about the polarisation of Britain. Many of us are no longer prepared even to consider another point of view. *The Times* in a one-liner said that I reported on my home country, and found it 'worthy of much improvement'. The validity of my analysis was simply ignored; it was enough to have made criticism of Mrs T's brave new world to be dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration.

But the useful lessons for a working scribe were not in the politics of the British press, but in what it feels like to be interviewed. I had always seen the tape-recorder as a harmless tool of our trade, yet the first time a reporter stuck one under my nose, I nearly froze. Even the first 'how old are you?' came as a shock, an intrusion into privacy.

> ***'The useful lessons for a working scribe were not in the politics of the British press, but in what it feels like to be interviewed . . .'***

Some of the tricks of the trade seemed rather shoddy. At the end of an hour-long (tape-recorded) interview with a reporter, during which we had ranged across every aspect of contemporary Britain, my interlocutor suddenly shot me a much sharper question. Would I wish to see a famous public school in his circulation area closed down? It was a sucker punch I saw coming, so I replied politely that I didn't know anything about that specific school, but that in general I stood with what George Orwell had said during the second world war — that a future Labour government would be better occupied abolishing the public schools and the House of Lords than in nationalising the railways.

Sure enough, a 120-word piece appeared under the headline 'Abolish the public schools', which was a slightly bizarre way to review a book in which only one chapter out of 12 was devoted to education. Indubitably, I'd have received more column inches if I'd fallen for the sucker punch.

Reporters (I among them) often make glib promises — 'Of course, I'll send you a copy/return your material/make sure the picture desk post you some prints.' We (or at least I) usually mean it, but we don't, I suspect, often make it. I lost count of the times people who interviewed me failed to fulfil such pledges.

Several journalists invited to a small launching party did not bother to reply. We knew that meant they weren't coming, so invited others who could. But people less familiar with the ways of the Fourth Estate do get caught and embarrassed by journalists' frequent presumption that they are above normal social conventions. Such small and shoddy betrayals undermine respect for the press.

Television probity is on a par. A producer promised me a cassette of a filmed item we did. Maybe it never appeared; the crew announced they were knocking off before we had finished — I had travelled over 200 miles and cancelled other interviews to meet their convenience. The producer foolishly let slip that there might be overtime at a Manchester United soccer game at Old Trafford that night, and they shot back to the studios when we were scarcely halfway through.

Why (while I'm in critical vein) are receptionists so supercilious? Two days running when I presented myself at Broadcasting House at the appointed hour I was asked what time I was expected. I felt like saying 'tomorrow actually, but I've nowhere to sleep'.

THERE WERE the funny moments. The DJ at a local radio station who happily admitted that he hadn't read the book — then very few of my interviewers had — and then called me 'John' throughout. (The station's main *raison d'etre*, to judge from the calls I overheard from listeners, appeared to be to reunite owners with lost pets.)

There was the night I spent in a railway hotel in a room under the eaves that might have driven a man to suicide. I met a local journalist downstairs the following morning — after having failed to get breakfast — and found to my amazement my night's accommodation described in his eventual copy as 'a plush city centre hotel'.

There was a reporter (another one who never sent me a cutting) who asked aggressively why it was that inside every reporter there was a frustrated author trying to get out. I said as sweetly as I could that in my case I thought he *had* got out. My questioner was a suitable case for the reverse role playing I was indulging in.

There was a book-signing session in Aberdeen — '*this* is more like Walter Mitty', I thought, as I strode down Union Street with a new felt-tip in my pocket. Alas no books had arrived, and my big moment evaporated. The kindly manager gave me a present off his shelves by way of compensation; he, at least, knew how to do the right thing.

Inevitably, British Rail screwed up. I boarded a train from Aberdeen to Newcastle after a foodless day, having earlier checked that there would be a buffet service on board. In the event, there was not even a trolley, which made it a long night even in a first-class seat (the train was all one class, making the lack of food even less excusable). 'You'd do us all a favour by writing to complain,' said the guard. In newspaper parlance I was presumably enjoying a ride on a luxury train!

My most impressive write-up was in the Oslo paper, *Dagbladet*. The writer, his photographer and I had a splendid lunch at the Gay Hussar in Soho ('Journalist enjoys gourmet meal'), followed by a picture session round the corner which we hoped would look like one of the more run-down areas of Peckham.

The result was most pleasing. Two pictures of the author clasping latest work, set against the run-down Britain Mrs Thatcher's friends would have us believe doesn't exist. Walter Mitty at last? Perhaps, I haven't dared ask anyone to translate the article yet. I wanted to spare my last illusion before I recrossed the footlights and went back to asking the questions again. □

Robert Chesshyre is a staff journalist with the Observer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catcher in the court

ELGY GILLESPIE ***disturbs a reclusive idol***

Washington

A YEAR AGO, the writer Jerome David Salinger came to New York in order to meet the lawyers of Mr Ian Hamilton of the *Sunday Times* and his publishers at Random House. At 68, Salinger was very good-looking and appeared to be in excellent health. He was lucid.

What brought him in was Ian Hamilton's biography for Random House, *J. D. Salinger: a writing life*, a volume announced but not published in 1986. Claiming that the book 'makes unfair use of his personal copyrighted letters', the writer brought a case to stop the book by injuction.

His interrogators were stunned and curious. Apart from very occasional 'sightings', the reclusive Salinger had not been seen in public for nearly a quarter of a century. Fan mail from high-school students and distraught teachers of his classic *Catcher in the Rye* is routinely dumped from his clifftop concrete-block study in Cornish, New Hampshire. Importunate reporters meet abuse. He was certainly not available for comment when the killer of John Lennon cited the book beloved by all adolescents as his legal defence, writing 'This is my statement' in his copy and reading it as he awaited the homicide squad on the kerb.

He has gone to some very odd lengths to stop his fans from talking to him. Every time journalists have lain in wait as he trudges to his bunker on the cliff to start his daily slab of unpublished fiction, Salinger evades them. 'Is there anything more boring than a talking writer?' he told a *Newsweek* stake-out in 1974, who tried to shake his hand.

What brought him to New York for the first time since the mid-'60s was his insistence that Ian Hamilton remove the excerpts from his letters included in Hamilton's biography of Salinger, intended as a follow-up to his *Lowell*. The case allowed his opponents to quiz him about his life for an entire day. It was probably the first time he had answered questions since two high-school girls splashed an interview with him on the front of their school paper back in 1953 when he first went to Cornish. (After that, he removed his photo from bookjackets and never again gave an interview, apart from telling a surprised *New York Times* in 1974 on the phone that publishing was 'a terrible invasion of my privacy'.) Yes, he was still writing. A long piece of fiction. His books still earned him $100,000 a year in royalties. No, he would not allow his letters to be excerpted. 'Privacy is privacy. Letters were meant for a certain pair of eyes and those eyes alone.'

Ironically, it was Salinger's effort to block the publication of his 79 letters, even in Hamilton's revised and paraphrased form, that has made it possible for any member of the public with $20 and nerve to go and read them all in the Library of Congress. In registering them with the copyright board, he was obliged to copy them from their homes in Yale and Texas universities and file them. They are now part of court record, despite his vain attempt to seal the entire case.

The following extract reveals Salinger about as rude and as personal as in any of his 79 letters to friends. In this one, dated 1943, he is telling his mentor Whit Burnett about Oona O'Neill — by whom he was jilted — and her engagement to Charlie Chaplin. 'I can see them at home in the evenings. Chaplin squatting grey and nude, atop his chiffonier, swinging his thyroid around his head by his bamboo cane, like a dead rat. Oona in an aquamarine gown . . . I'm facetious, but I'm sorry. Sorry for anyone with a profile as young and lovely as Oona's . . .'

The right to silence

The letters run from 1939 to 1961, and are intense and personal, resonant with the Salinger you remember as Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye*. Remember how the teenage drop-out and truant Holden (whom all of us have been at some point or another) adulates his favourite writer with these words? 'What really knocks me is out is a book that, when you've done reading it, you wish the author who wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it . . .'

Salinger has had that effect on everyone who ever read *Catcher in the Rye*, including the killer of John Lennon, Mark Chapman. Perhaps this is why he decided to stop publishing his work after a last rambling, confused Glass family story came out in 1964, in the *New Yorker*.

He lost his first case against Hamilton and Random House, but appealed. The Appeal Court ruled in his favour earlier this year, so Random House counter-appealed this summer. The case joined a list of 1,000 cases waiting to be heard by the Supreme Court front bench in Washington — cases that include last-second death-row appeals. Because the bench is still at a potentially deadlocked four-to-four impasse, thanks to the defeat of the Bork nomination, only a handful of cases have been accepted, and none are yet scheduled. But this is one.

Salinger is to claim his rights under the First Amendment, 'the right to petition the government for a redress of grievance', and assert that freedom of speech in his case can mean *not* to speak. Random House will use the same amendment, also quoting in turn the clause about the freedom of speech and of the press.

It will, of course, have very profound repercussions upon the publishing scene in America as well on biography writing in general. What effect it will have upon British publishing remains to be seen. Will it help it in the same way that *Spycatcher* helped Australian and American publishing? Or will it mean a further-reaching prohibition? Bodies like the American Publishers Association who are supporting the Random House case are still trying to assess the full extent of the threat.

There is a growing school of thought that Salinger brought this upon himself. He denied his co-operation to Mr Hamilton, whose *Lowell* (while missing a thing or two towards the end) is exemplary. For over three years the latter spoke to and drew heavily upon private correspondence among the closest Salinger colleagues. Yale and University of Texas libraries made him sign a promise not to excerpt from the letters.

US copyright law protects private letters, granting authors the final and absolute ownership, though recipients own the paper. Hamilton and Random House agreed to the changes demanded by Salinger, but Salinger obtained galley proofs and said their changes had been mere 'flimsy paraphrases'. According to Appeal Court Judge Newman's own report, there are paraphrased quotes from letters in 40 per cent of the book's 192 pages, and the letters are, in his view, what makes the book worth reading at all.

An example of Hamilton's paraphrasing (Salinger's version of the adulation of the French for American GIs after the liberation of Paris): 'If we had stood on top of the jeep and taken a leak, they would have said, "what a marvellous custom".' (Hamilton's version): 'If the conquerors had chosen to urinate from the roofs of their vehicles.' Led by attorney Marcia B. Paul, Salinger's lawyers were irate but powerless about the fact that there are no restrictions to quoting court documents. We can thus compare some of the two versions, and come away preferring Salinger's by far.

To judge by one of the stray fragments that showed up in the *Fiction Writer's Handbook* in the '70s, a funny little epilogue snipped from a lost 1966 preface to works by Salinger's former writing-class teacher and mentor Whit Burnett, Salinger himself once felt that same desire mentioned by Holden Caulfield about his favourite author. He describes Burnett's reading of a William Faulkner story, saying it moved him so much he 'wanted to shoot Faulkner a letter . . . I wanted to tell Faulkner . . . that not once throughout the reading did Burnett come between the author and his beloved silent reader.'

Absurdly overrated

More than one critic — R. Emmett Tyrrell foremost among them — has pointed out how Salinger's work has been absurdly overrated, considering that he has written only one slim classic and a few short stories — not all of them smashers. My own bet, for what it's worth, is that he knows this. 'He has been called many things . . .' Tyrrell has written in the *Washington Post*, 'but never a cad, an ingrate and a menace to American literature, such as it is . . .' This 'manifestly sour fellow', Tyrrell goes on to say, has made a lucrative living from his work and lived protected by lawyers and agents according to his fancy every since. His 'fancy' resembles that of Howard Hughes and Greta Garbo: 'For a writer to live that way is an abomination.'

The answer to the puzzle, I bet, lies not in his youthful, spontaneous, open letters. If you read his stories in *For Esme with Love and Squalor* or *Franny and Zooey* you will notice he is obsessed with loss of innocence: the theme of essential goodness and beauty in children, contrasted with the evil and harm in adulthood, recurs over and over. The children of Cornish spoke years ago of being invited to the bunker by 'Jerry' who gave them coke, played them rock and roll, and wanted to hear them talk.

He was married once, to a girl he is known to have recreated for *Franny and Zooey* and who was mentally hung-up on 'the Jesus prayer'. All we know now is that they were divorced. Perhaps she grew up. Perhaps he never wanted to. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ECONOMICS — CRASH OF '87

The poor can cure recession

Andrew Tylecote

THERE IS always an irrational element to a stock market crash. But there is always, too, a rational side: the belated recognition that the underlying economy is unhealthy. Even before this month's lurch, we had every reason to worry about the world economy.

The developing world is hopelessly in debt, with its export earnings so ravaged by abysmal commodity prices that it has no prospect of meeting the minimal needs of its inhabitants without general default. The Eastern countries are almost as hard pressed. Most of the West has been growing too slowly to prevent high unemployment rising even further; and the one major country now without that problem, the United States, has a huge balance of payments deficit.

How did the optimism last so long? Because until recently, it was thought that the problems were on their way to being solved by two major changes which had taken place between spring 1985 and spring 1986: the devaluation of the US dollar, and the fall in the oil price. The experts correctly predicted that within two years the fall in the dollar would lead to a marked upturn in the volume of US exports, and a fall in the volume of imports. But they counted also on the fall in the oil price to raise demand in the rest of the developed world, particularly in big oil importers like Germany and Japan: by buying more, these countries would ease the payments problems both of the developing countries and the USA. They were wrong: and I said so at the time.

> ***The developing world is hopelessly in debt, and has no prospect of meeting the minimal needs of its inhabitants without general default***

In the *Guardian* of 5 February 1986, in 'Sorting out the haves from the have-nots', I warned that 'what has been happening in the oil market these last few months is extremely damaging' to the world economy; 'if the oil price goes on falling, it is potentially disastrous'. For 'the oil price fall transfers foreign exchange from countries like Mexico which are already short of it (and will have to cut demand for imports) to countries like Germany which are already running trade surpluses (and are happy to accumulate unspent foreign exchange without much increasing imports) . . . the more unstable and unpredictable the oil price, the lower will be investment demand . . . the greater the severity of any sudden shocks, the greater the danger to the world financial system.'

FORTUNATELY, the oil price did not go on falling: it recovered somewhat, thanks largely to a quiet deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, under the influence of the latter's guns — and no thanks to the British government, which did nothing at all to cut output. Disaster was averted, accordingly; but world growth sorely disappointed the OECD, which had predicted 2.5 per cent in 1986 and got 1.1 per cent, and has just reduced its prediction for 1987 from 3.25 to 2.5 per cent. In consequence, the US deficit did not fall.

Why did most experts get it wrong? They failed to understand that what had happened was not simply the reverse of the oil price rises. These were deflationary mainly because most of the transfer of wealth was to countries like Saudi Arabia which were wealthy already and found it very difficult to spend the extra: even the poorer oil producers took *some* time to spend it. But time passed; the poorer producers learnt to spend their revenues, soon even before they received them; new poor countries like Mexico and Egypt became major producers and overspenders; and the Saudis, to prop up the oil price, cut their output so far that they got into deficit themselves. So one reason why the price fall did not reverse the deflationary effect of the price rises was that this had been partly reversed already.

The experts also neglected the effect of uncertainty. The rises stopped energy-using investment projects, because at high energy prices they would not pay; but it was a long time before there was enough confidence in high prices being maintained, for energy-saving and energy-producing projects to become popular. Now the oil price fall has stopped many of these — but no one is going to rush to restart the energy-using projects.

A third source of disappointment was the response of the governments of countries like Germany and Japan which gained greatly from the price fall. Deflation had been forced on them after 1973 by the effect of oil price rises on their inflation rates, which rose sharply, and their balance of payments, which went heavily into deficit. So most economists expected them to reflate in 1986, when the situation had been reversed. They did not. Germany increased its cyclically-adjusted deficit (the measure of fiscal reflation) by a mere 0.3 per cent in 1986, and not at all this year; Japan actually reduced it, i.e. deflated, by 0.4 per cent each year.

Why? Because 1987 is not 1973. Two things have changed. First, there is a new generation of policy-maker. The reluctant deflators of 1973 belonged to the generaton which had grown up during the Depression, and their One Big Thing was the message of Keynes; that is is the government's business to avoid mass unemployment by whatever means necessary. That generation has left the stage now — Heath, Nixon, Brandt, Pompidou and the civil servants and bankers who advised them.

THE GENERATION now at the top is that of Thatcher, Kohl, Chirac, Nakasone, which knows little and cares less about the Depression; instead *they* are familiar with the irritation of government intervention in the postwar economy, and *their* One Big Thing is the need to set the market mechanism free. (True, Reagan belongs to the previous generation — but he has learnt its successors' lines.) They have no sense that it is the government's responsibility to get rid of mass unemployment; and they have their generation of opinion-formers alongside them, in the newspapers and the economics faculties, to rationalise their neglect.

They also have a new excuse — and this is the second thing which has changed. They are all grappling with large public sector deficits. The best known reason for this is that once your economy is in recession, tax revenues automatically fall and payments for items like unemployment benefit automatically soar. Another, which applies particularly to Germany and Japan, is that most Western countries have at present an unusually large proportion of people in the working age groups, who are saving hard (via pensions contributions and mortgage repayments) for retirement, and so spending less. Their extra saving has to be balanced by some government's extra borrowing.

These reasons don't suggest any solution to the problem; but there is a third, which does. It is that the inequality of income distribution — more vividly, the gap between rich and poor — has been growing fast in the last ten years, in almost every Western country, with government connivance or open encouragement. The poor can be counted on to spend almost all they get; not so the rich. To take from the poor and give to the rich was thus, as Talleyrand said of a misdeed of Napoleon's, 'worse than a crime — it was an error': it reduced aggregate demand, and prepared the way for the crash.

> ***The inequality of income distribution — more vividly, the gap between rich and poor — has been growing fast in the last ten years, with government connivance or open encouragement. The poor can be counted on to spend almost all they get; not so the rich***

It is not hard to see how both crime and error can be reversed. The United States gets poor reflationary value for its huge Federal budget deficit, because so much is spent on feeding the high profits of the military-industrial complex; the rich beneficiaries contribute little to demand. Let them, and us, take much more from the rich and give it to the poor — in more generous welfare benefits and in programmes like renovating inner-city housing using local labour taken off the dole. Do not call that socialism: call it a Robin Hood strategy. Down with the Sheriff of Grantham, and back to Merrie England! □

Andrew Tylecote is at the School of Management and Economic Studies, University of Sheffield. He is author of The Causes of the Present Inflation, *Macmillan, £5.95.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The despair of unilateralism

PETER SHORE MP *argues that Labour's defence policy cannot survive another election — and must change*

LABOUR CAN count itself extremely fortunate in this June's general election. Owing to the general ineptitude of the Tory campaign and in particular the poor targeting of their assault on Labour's non-nuclear defence policy, far less damage was done in terms of loss of electoral support and loss of party morale than could have been expected. Of course Labour trailed well behind the Tories on defence. Polls confirmed that 52 per cent of the electorate were *less* likely, as opposed to 18 per cent who were *more* likely to vote Labour because of our defence policy — a negative score of 34 per cent. And 57 per cent thought the Tories would ensure Britain being safely defended as against 17 per cent for Labour.

But it could have been worse. For two major changes in Labour's non-nuclear defence policy were announced on the eve of the campaign: and neither Tory attackers nor Labour defenders appeared to notice them. One was Labour's statement that, given the sensitive stage of the Geneva talks on INF weapons, it would not insist on the unconditional withdrawal of American cruise missiles but would wait upon the outcome of the Soviet/American negotiations.

Common sense, of course. But no one bothered to point out that what the negotiations were about was not an immediate withdrawal of cruise, but a five-year phasing out of SS-20s on the one hand, cruise and Pershing IIs on the other. If a Labour government had been elected — and assuming that the INF agreement is reached this year — then the last stage of cruise withdrawal would have been after the next general election.

But the logic of this statement, of not upsetting multilateral negotiations, went well beyond cruise. If it is accepted that a multilateral withdrawal of intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) missiles is preferable to a unilateral removal of cruise from the UK, then equally it must be preferable to make any dismantling of other US nuclear bases in Britain, and of Britain's own Polaris, contingent upon the outcome of multilateral agreements on cuts in long-range strategic missiles.

The indivisible strategy

Still more damaging to the unilateralists' case was the only slightly coded message, announced by Denis Healey (with Neil Kinnock's acceptance) that we accepted that NATO strategy in Europe was 'indivisible'. To quote Healey's actual words:

> . . . a Labour government will seek to persuade its allies to drop its current reliance on using nuclear weapons against Soviet conventional attack. *But we recognise that NATO strategy must be indivisible and we will co-operate in current strategy until we succeed in changing it.*

What this meant was that the British Army on the Rhine would have the support of the same battlefield nuclear weapons, ground- and air-launched, as were available to other NATO armies deployed in Western Germany. A Labour government would of course have argued for a change in NATO strategy, for the replacement of nuclear-backed conventional defence by reinforced conventional defence alone. But until NATO was persuaded to adopt a non-nuclear defence policy in Western Germany, Labour would support the strategy of graduated (including nuclear) deterrents in Western Europe. Again, common sense. But hardly a non-nuclear defence policy.

Even more vulnerable to Tory attack was Labour's position on the American strategic umbrella. If a Labour government had renounced the UK's own nuclear weapons and if all American nuclear weapons in Britain, including cruise, had been negotiated away, then, like a number of other NATO countries, we would have had no nuclear weapons based on our soil. But all NATO countries, by the mutual assistance clauses that lie at the heart of the North Atlantic Treaty, are defended by American nuclear weapons. Where then is the moral superiority of Labour's non-nuclear strategy? Where is the moral difference between being defended by British nuclear weapons, British-based American nuclear weapons and American nuclear weapons based on continental United States and on other overseas US bases? *There is a case, a very strong case, on moral grounds for rejecting nuclear defence: for being prepared to surrender rather than risk or experience a nuclear assault. But you cannot reject nuclear defence while remaining a firm supporter and member state of NATO.*

CND — and what might be called the Chesterfield left — have long recognised this. And that is why the withdrawal from NATO is a central — though little publicised — part of CND policy. That is not what the great majority of the British people want. And Labour has, again and again, committed itself to continued membership of NATO.

Throughout the campaign Labour said nothing about the morality of nuclear weapons. The whole case for a non-nuclear policy was couched in the practical, no-nonsense terms of realistic defence and value for money. £10,000 million would buy more effective defence if used to purchase tanks, frigates and aircraft than if squandered on a fleet of Trident submarines. This was — and is — the strongest part of Labour's defence policy.

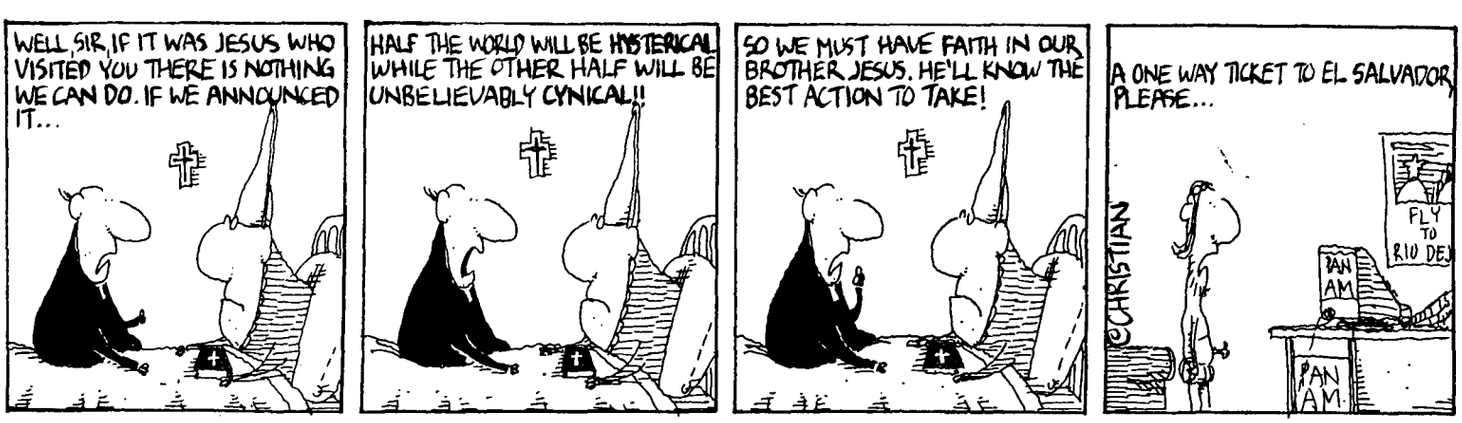
But why then, when only negligible sums were involved, scrap the existing Polaris submarines? Why summon them back to port and start 'decommissioning' them within a fortnight of a Labour government taking power? And why, if defence arguments are paramount, close down all US nuclear submarine and nuclear aircraft bases here in Britain — *hopefully* within a year, *certainly* within the lifetime of this parliament? Even Denis Healey was hard put to answer that. Because, so he assured us, Polaris was clapped-out and the Americans wouldn't need our bases anymore.

Morally flawed

What chance has Labour's non-nuclear policy, so morally flawed and riddled with inconsistencies, of surviving yet another general election campaign? It would be gambling indeed if we were to rely upon another Tory election campaign as inept as the one that they won massively four months ago. But even if we took that gamble, events by 1991/92 would be far more hostile to Labour's defence policy than in 1987.

The first and major reason is that the £10,000 million available in 1987 to purchase increased conventional defence will no longer be there. It will have been either spent or contracted to be spent on Trident submarines, Trident missiles and Trident warheads.

The second reason is that a British unilateral renunciation of her own independent strategic


WELL SIR, IF IT WAS JESUS WHO VISITED YOU THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO. IF WE ANNOUNCED IT...
HALF THE WORLD WILL BE HYSTERICAL WHILE THE OTHER HALF WILL BE UNBELIEVABLY CYNICAL!!
SO WE MUST HAVE FAITH IN OUR BROTHER JESUS. HE'LL KNOW THE BEST ACTION TO TAKE!
A ONE WAY TICKET TO EL SALVADOR PLEASE...
©CHRISTIAN
FLY TO RIO DEJ
PAN AM
PAN AM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strike force will involve in 1990/91 scrapping a system, not 20 years old like Polaris and with no more than a decade of use left, but a brand new fleet with a prospective life that would take us to the third decade of the 21st century.

The argument about Polaris (largely false) that we would be giving up a clapped-out, unreliable and ineffective deterrent would simply not be available on Trident.

Joining multilateralism

Third, while we may expect a greater role for conventional weapons in the defence of Europe than we have today, and while there is a real prospect of successful talks on strategic arms reduction between the US and USSR, it is inconceivable that in 1991/92 there will not be still a substantial element of nuclear defence to back up NATO armies in Germany. That nuclear back-up will continue to be available to BAOR, as to other Western contingents, because NATO is indeed indivisible — it is nonsense to imagine nuclear-backed armies on all sectors of the German front, except where the British Army is located.

So what shall we do? One solution that I do *not* favour is to abandon, unilaterally, Britain's own nuclear weapons while accepting the continued presence of American nuclear bases in Britain — and American nuclear protection. Apart from the fact that by 1991/92 there would be no cost saving by scrapping Trident, it would be a major and permanent change in Anglo-American relationships. If we were to entrust not only our future nuclear defence but also nuclear disarmament policy to the US alone, we would indeed be accepting a satellite role. Moreover, those who argue that the US, in an age of nuclear strategic equality, would never protect London and Bonn if it meant the destruction of New York and Washington, may well be right. And, if they are wrong now, is it reasonable to assume that they will be wrong in the year 2000 — or in the first or second decade of the next century?

We can do better than that. We should be ready to join in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Gorbachev's declaration at Reykjavik and subsequently, that he is ready to negotiate for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of this century, should now be the focal point of Labour's disarmament and defence policies.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is, however tenuously, now on the agenda of world politics. Labour's central aim should be to keep it there. And for two reasons. First, because a major gap has already opened up between those who favour this goal and those who, like Mrs Thatcher, wish to keep nuclear weapons, whether or not an agreement on elimination can be reached.

Second, because the prospect of multilateral denuclearisation of defence does force the issue of conventional weapons and the achievement of East/West balance in them, into the centre of defence and disarmament policy.

The best solution would be, of course, the achievement of balance by the dismantling of weapons and the reduction of force levels by both the Warsaw and NATO pacts — a goal that has so far eluded the MBFR negotiations in Vienna. But if that continues to be unattainable, then a sufficient investment in NATO's conventional forces will have to be achieved.

No one should minimise the difficulties involved in achieving a major shift in Labour's policy. But the party's commitment to review all aspects of policy, without exception, confirmed at Brighton last month, is the first step forward. Equally important there are signs, both in the constituencies and in the unions, that the idea of a trade-off — although not one for one — of nuclear weapons with the Soviets, rather than simple UK renunciation, is gaining support. A major cause is precisely the change in the international climate that is leading to the first real triumph of multilateral nuclear disarmament — the INF treaty.

Unilateralism is, at root, failed multilateralism. It grew out of the despair of achieving negotiated reductions that seized so many in the Labour Party in 1979/80 when the Americans failed to ratify SALT II, when the Russians began to deploy their SS-20s and when all the nuclear powers embarked upon expansion and modernisation programmes.

But Labour's policies in the 1990s cannot remain marooned in the despairing politics of 1979/80. It is Gorbachev, not Brezhnev, who now rules in Moscow: and in Washington, second-term Reagan is very different from the Reagan of 1980. *The world since Reykjavik has changed dramatically. Labour must change with it.*

Peter Shore is MP for Bethnal Green and Stepney and was a member of cabinet in the 1966-70 and 1974-79 Labour governments. He has been shadow foreign secretary, shadow chancellor, shadow trade and industry secretary and shadow leader of the House since 1979.

ARP
GRAND CHARITY
BALL
MONDAY
DEC 21st
9pm-2am
CECIL SHARP
HOUSE
REGENTS PARK
ROAD NW1
Spin over to ARPs Christmas Ball in aid of INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS and have a wonderful evening for a good cause. Fabulous LIVE swing band 'SOUND OF 17' with singer EILEEN SCOTT with special guest appearance by KAY CLARK!!. The programme is packed with music, food, wine, disco, auction (interesting and sought after lots) raffles and non stop fun.
DRESS is POSH FROCKS for women please and WHITE TIE for men - Scots may wear kilts.
TICKETS are £12.50 each available from Rita Jarvis at ARP Anthony Richardson & Partners, 31 Oval Road, London NW1 7EA. Phone her on 01-485 0991 for further information.
CHILDREN are FREE
Tear off slip and return to ARP - HURRY - ENTRANCE BY TICKET ONLY AND NUMBERS ARE LIMITED!!
NAME : .....
ADDRESS : .....
I would like ..... tickets and enclose a cheque for £.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The laboratory's test

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

previews an early test of government educational reforms

'THIS COULD be the turning point, the beginning of the end of Thatcherism,' said an enthusiastic canvasser returning from a round on the knocker for the Southfields ward by-election in Wandsworth. The poll in this marginal ward on Thursday is indeed crucial. The Tories have a majority of just one on the council and, with no Alliance councillors getting in the way, victory would give Labour overall control of Wandsworth for the first time since 1978.

For the past nine years, the borough has served as a laboratory for Tory ideas on local government: its leader during the early part of Tory control, Christopher Chope, has subsequently been rewarded with the post of junior minister at the Department of the Environment. Wandsworth has contracted out 13 services, more than any other local authority: it's included some which no other authority has dared to touch, like catering in its old people's homes.

Through its council house sales policy, over 10,000 homes have been 'disposed of': the policy extends far beyond simply implementing the right-to-buy legislation. Half a dozen entire council estates with 1,500 homes have been emptied and sold to private developers, and there have been 5,000 sales under Wandsworth's Priority Group Sales scheme (selling houses empty through their tenants' death or moving). The resulting 'yuppification' of Battersea cost Labour the parliamentary seat in June.

Now Wandsworth has jumped at the chance of opting out of the Inner London Education Authority, which covers 12 boroughs. It has already voted to leave the authority in the spring of 1990, the date which will be specified in the forthcoming Education Bill. This gives the by-election added importance because it is the first electoral test — and possibly the only significant one, since the decision is irrevocable and has to be made before the 1990 borough elections — of the government's plan to allow opting out and — in the London context — breaking up ILEA.

Leaving ILEA makes less obvious sense for Wandsworth than for the other two supporters of opting out, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, because, unlike them, Wandsworth is a net beneficiary from the Authority: it receives £110m of education services while its ratepayers only contribute £35m.

The council's Tory leadership is vague about how this gap will be bridged, apart from pointing to the government's commitment that boroughs which decide to leave ILEA will not lose out financially. They have identified £5m in administrative savings but this appears to include educational welfare and other centralised services which may sound like administration to councillors unversed in educational terminology but are essential parts of the service.

Paul Beresford, the Tory council leader and an acerbic man whose lack of a common touch shows through in his impatience at public meetings, has found it an uphill task convincing local educationalists. A meeting of 75 local headmasters voted, unanimously apart from a couple of abstentions, against the plan. The unity of opposition is due to the council's failure to disguise the fact that its proposals would clearly mean cuts in ILEA's non-statutory services, such as its adult education service (£4m) and its nursery education, currently providing for nearly half the borough's three-and four-year-olds.

Wandsworth's public relations exercise has been damaged by a ludicrous MORI poll, a belated consultation exercise. The only question covering the education curriculum asks whether respondents feel that too much or too little emphasis is placed on certain topics in secondary school. Sensible enough, except that the only two topics mentioned are 'sex education' and 'homosexuality'. Other questions focused on whether church schools should continue to be funded by education authorities and on whether the council should provide extra services for 'children with special educational needs' on the rates.

The other issue highlighted by Labour is the poll tax. While average rates are £399, the poll tax bill per adult would be £435; Labour plan to put a leaflet through every door with a calculation of the household's new bill.

To pre-empt a high rates and 'loony left' image, Labour said that its rates rises would be kept to single figures as soon as the by-election was called. Its leader, Mike Barley, has also pledged that a Labour council would work hard to clear the backlog of 700 council house sales caught up in the system, while stopping any sales outside those required by the right to buy legislation.

Southfields is more typical of an outer rather than an inner London suburb, mainly consisting of small terraced houses now avidly sought after by the upwardly mobile, an area that is demographically moving away from Labour. People canvassed on their doorstep do not raise the issues of poll tax and education spontaneously, but the response is good when they are mentioned. Labour has an experienced local candidate in John Gibbs, who only lost by 143 votes last time; while the Tories have put up yet another researcher from Central Office, David Fanthorpe.

To gain control, Labour only requires a swing of 1.5 per cent; it polled 39 per cent to the Tories' 42 per cent in 1986. With much of the Alliance's 18 per cent up for grabs, Labour's task is not impossible. However, early canvass returns which suggest that Labour's vote is holding up well also show little shift among Tory voters, even parents. Privately, Labour admits that the chance to take over Mrs Thatcher's favourite borough has probably come a year too early, before the legislation on education and the poll tax has properly sunk in. It seems we will have to wait a while for the beginning of the end of Thatcherism.

BEATING THE BLUES

A weekend of political discussion and entertainment 4/5 December 1987

BRYAN GOULD · JACK STRAW · GLENYS KINNOCK · JOHN LLOYD · PETER HAIN · JOAN RUDDOCK · ROBIN COOK · PETER MANDELSON · BEVERLY ANDERSON · GORDON BROWN · NEIL FLETCHER · DIANA JEUDA · TONY BLAIR · PETER HAIN · PATRICIA HOLLIS · PHILLIP WHITEHEAD · MARTIN JACQUES · AUSTIN MITCHELL · CHRIS SMITH · BARBARA ROGERS · PETER SHORE · ROBIN MURRAY · ANN PETTIFOR · CYNTHIA COCKBURN · CHARLES LEADBEATER

Join these and many others at South Bank Polytechnic, London, to discuss Labour's policy review.

Debates include: **Socialism in the 1990s; Defence; Can local government survive; Education; Market socialism; Electoral reform; Who controls broadcasting; Women in trades unions; How can Labour win in London?** and plenty *more. There'll also be discussions on political journals,* campaigning techniques and building a mass party.

Entertainment, creche, stalls, food, videos – it'll all be there.

For more details, write to **Beating the Blues**, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN (Tel. 01-222 8877).

SPONSORED BY: ARTS FOR LABOUR · FABIAN SOCIETY · NEW STATESMAN · ONE WORLD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Socialism is not on the agenda for now

PETER HAIN *sketches out an agenda for Labour's soft left*

'THE PARTY is in danger of going down the plughole . . . I'm less convinced than before that we can duck the question of loyalty.'

As an admission that there is no longer a distinctive 'soft left' strategy for Labour's recovery, this statement could not be faulted for its honesty. Coming from one of the candidates for election to the executive of Labour's largest left-wing pressure group, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, it was evidence of a wider lack of confidence which will doubtless be echoed at the LCC's annual general meeting in London on Saturday.

For many in and around the LCC and the Tribune Group, it has become what you are *against* that defines your politics rather than what you are *for*. Without a positive alternative of its own, Labour's 'soft left' is increasingly being defined by opposition to the 'hard' and 'ultra' lefts coupled with loyalism to the leadership.

It goes without saying that a basis for trust should exist between party activists and the leadership and that it takes two to build it. It is also the case that trying simultaneously to run the party (as many on the soft left have found themselves doing) *and* perform a pressure group role within it, is a difficult position to sustain.

But the soft left is not strong enough to run the party on its own. It has chosen to do so in alliance with the centre, which is is probably the only realistic option, given the rightward shift in Britain's political culture and the lack of popular support for socialism. Nevertheless, a strong democratic left force is still needed, independent of (though not at war with) the leadership, in order to build a wider hegemony for its politics at the base of the party so that it can bargain from a position of strength in such an alliance.

Left or right?

The Tribune/LCC axis has two broad choices. It can regroup, embrace others on the left outside its ranks who are also prepared to build a genuinely *democratic* left, and then move forward to modernise the labour movement and renew its socialist appeal. Alternatively, the soft left can look to the centre right and a pragmatic, modernised electoralism: a Saatchi & Saatchi gloss on the very labourist politics epitomised by the Wilson/Callaghan government, the failure of which paved the way for Thatcherism. At present it seems many have chosen the latter route, albeit by default rather than design. And, in case this may seem a matter only for *aficionados* of internecine Labour Party politics, it does actually bear upon the whole future of socialism in Britain.

If the calculation is that Thatcher can be defeated by rehabilitating Labour's respectability through slick PR and distancing from the 'loony left', then in the interests of gaining office there may even be a case for dissolving the left into the party's mainstream. However, if it is accepted that Thatcherism cannot be defeated without challenging it *ideologically*, projecting a radical socialist alternative and building alliances with groups prepared to defend themselves under attack, then a different agenda is required.

First of all the argument for 'mass politics' must be re-stated. It does not simply mean putting out regular newsletters and campaigning efficiently, though these have been welcome signs that local parties are breaking out of their internalised preoccupations. It means a different style of politics in which Labour would become rooted in the local community, its culture as much as its politics, in a way that has not been the case at least since the fragmentation of traditional working-class communities.

> ***'The suspicion is that the left doesn't have anything to say about how to make socialism popular'***

Second, the party's policy-making machinery and annual conference should be reformed. Although it should retain its constitutional sovereignty, the party conference is ill-equipped to make policy. Composite motions may be vehicles for the orderly progression of business, but as a means of determining priorities and serious policies they are a joke. National Executive statements, unamendable, handed down minutes before they are debated and guaranteed by union block votes to be adopted, are equally unsatisfactory. The result is that the standard of debate is low, and speeches become ritualistic appeals to the gallery rather than thought-provoking. Policy has become something sorted out or fudged at national level, instead of thoroughly discussed locally where it needs to be understood and accepted if public support is to be canvassed.

Third, and most important, is the current policy review being undertaken by the National Executive. If it is not to become a vehicle for burying radical policies, or a defensive exercise in damage limitation which has been the hallmark of so much of Labour's policy presentation since 1983, then the left must take it seriously. Sadly, however, Labour's left has virtually abdicated responsibility for serious policy-making since it made all the running with the alternative economic strategy in the 1970s: the suspicion is that it does not have anything intelligent to say about the formidable task of making socialism popular. If the left continues to pretend that one-liners and rhetorical appeals to traditional class solidarity are sufficient, then it cannot complain if the outcome of the review is not to its liking.

The left must begin by coming to terms with a fundamental truth: 'socialism' is not on the agenda for the next Labour government, however 'pure' it might be. Neither the objective conditions nor the popular support necessary for socialist transformation within a five-year parliamentary term exists. Instead of pretending otherwise, the left should concentrate upon formulating policies and strategies which *lay the foundations* for socialist advance. This is a quite different project from revisionism or pragmatism, which seeks merely to improve or humanely manage capitalism. It requires the left to project its demands and its policies *in strategic terms*. Whereas socialists normally discuss policies divorced from a strategy for their implementation, this is no longer credible, if it ever was.

Out of its shell

Thus, the challenge of Labour's review is to formulate policies which have as their *objective* socialist values of freedom, equality and democracy, but have as their *starting point* a recognition that Thatcherism has altered the terrain and built in new constraints. An honest and open debate is needed which gets away from a framework of what might be termed 'socialist willpower': whether Labour is sufficiently determined, or its socialism sufficiently full-blooded, to carry through a left-wing programme. Instead some very hard questions need answering.

- How feasible would it be for even the most left-wing socialist government to embark upon an immediate extension of public ownership?
- Has the internationalisation of capital, the integration of world finance and the fierce winds of foreign competition, made this the wrong question to be addressed?
- Rather than chasing the illusory hare of *immediate* public ownership, would it not be more radical to develop a wide-ranging programme for national, regional and local democratic control, regulation and intervention, taking government stakes in the private sector where necessary, and promoting workers' shareholdings?
- Is *democratisation* a necessary pre-condition for moving towards *socialisation*?
- In the case of British Telecom, why can't BT workers be given proper shares, allowing their unions collectively to mobilise individual proxies, rather than the present sop of a scheme? Instead of having only 1.6 million individual shareholders, why can't 23 million subscribers be given a share stake as consumers, and rights with these, like happens in Norway?

Labour also needs to be much more radical on other policies. The impression in the run-up to the election was that the party's statutory minimum wage policy was an embarrassment to the leadership. The left should make this a key demand, set at a level which will actually make a difference (i.e. beginning from £100 with further increases phased in over several years). Rather than defending the existing welfare system, should not the left examine the option of a minimum standard of benefit for everyone, set at a level sufficient for effective participation in society, and replacing the present hotch-potch of benefits which perpetuate the poverty trap?

On these and other issues Labour needs to seize the high ground — to be bold and innovative. Whether the party review becomes the vehicle for this could depend on whether the soft left comes out of its shell and sets the agenda again. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The continent starts here

DONALD SASSOON, ***reports on the decline of a conspiracy theory***

THE 'ALTERNATIVE to Trade Wars' conference (read What Should the Labour Party Do About Europe conference) seemed at first to be a typical British labour movement affair. It was held last weekend in the more depressing part of the Polytechnic of North London in the grim Holloway Road. The lecture theatre was dismal, the acoustics awful. The numerous continental socialists who presented papers had to pay their own travel expenses, hotels, meals and had, of course, to speak English.

First impressions were quickly dispelled. The audience, largely made up of left intelligentsia, former Bennites, some veteran eurofanatics and a sprinkling of trade unionists (Tom Sawyer of NUPE and Labour Party NEC, Bill Morris of the TGWU and Denis MacShane of the International Metal Workers Federation were the most prominent), seemed to enjoy hugely the spectacle of sacred cows being, if not slaughtered, at least seriously interfered with. The most sacred of them all, namely that the EEC and the Treaty of Rome have been a gigantic capitalist conspiracy whose fundamental purpose was to stop the advance of TGMOO (This Great Movement Of Ours) towards socialism, seems to have collapsed.

Which way for socialism?

It is no longer seriously believed that one day, continental socialists (usually referred to as *European* socialists), will see the truth and do it our way. But Hugh O'Shaughnessy may have spoken too soon when he announced that two myths had finally been buried in the Holloway Road: 'the continent is isolated' and 'socialism begins at Dover' (which way? shouted someone).

There is still a very long way to go towards the Europeanisation of the British Labour Movement. Those who fought British entry and Labour acceptance of the EEC want now to conduct a rearguard action within the Community in an endless battle to renegotiate Britain's position. It has taken 14 years for the little Englanders to accept the position Harold Wilson had adopted in 1974. But it is 14 years too late.

Frances Morrell, the driving force behind the conference, pointed out in a position paper written with Terry Ward that since the elections virtually all the analyses of Labour's defeat and future strategy made no reference to the global context. It is glibly assumed that once an election is won Labour will be able to implement whatever programme commands popular support.

This position was represented at the meeting by the Labour Party spokesperson for industry, Bryan Gould, once the leading light of the main anti-EEC ginger group. He showed that he had shifted his position by producing something approaching a *mea culpa*: 'We are paying the price for our lack of interest in ideas. We are short of ideas and short of vision. We have been too insular. We assumed we had nothing to learn from abroad'. If we had co-ordinated policies throughout Europe we would find it easier to resolve issues such as unemployment.

Blaming the foreigners

The right noises were made but the *mea culpa* stopped there. As it was unrealistic to expect the simultaneous elections of left-wing governments in each of the 12 member states Gould suggested that we had better see what important steps we could take at the national level. And here, it seemed, much could be done, such as rebuilding the Welfare State (and how? with go-it-alone reflation?). As for Europe the two most important issues to be tackled as 'European socialists' were the drastic revision of the CAP (described as a transfer of resources from poor consumers to rich landlords) and the large British deficit with Europe: 'It is German, Italian and French competition which has put our workers on the dole'. Later Gianni De Michelis, a former minister in Craxi's government, pointed out that in an integrated European market to talk about a British deficit with the rest of the EEC made as much sense as talking of a trade deficit between Naples and Milan. The real issue were regional disparities which would need to be tackled at the European level.

Gould was virtually alone in his optimism over national solutions to the crisis. He failed, moreover, to address himself to one of the central issues of the conference: the US budget deficit and what should be the European response to any eventual American attempt to reduce it. It was felt, particularly by Stuart Holland, (now a member of a largely Europeanist shadow Treasury team) that the effects in terms of a contraction of the American and world markets would be such that only co-ordinated European and OECD growth could prevent a slump. Go-it-alone reflation was folly.

Norbert Wieczorek and Gerhard Stahl, both of the German SPD, argued that it was necessary to modify *and* strengthen the EMS (which at present has a built-in bias towards a deflationary policy), allow the ECU to play the role of a substantial international reserve currency and thus move rapidly towards a common European currency. 'There is no half-way house between national independence and European unity'. We needed to move quickly towards a real internal market.' Stahl quoted from the SPD draft programme: 'Important Social Democratic objectives can no longer be accomplished within the boundaries of a single country'. This was echoed by *all* the continental socialists present.

They all started from the assumption that the formation of a European-wide internal market was certainly inevitable *and* desirable. Only this would bring about sufficient growth which would a) offset eventual US protectionist measures and/or any other measure taken to reduce their deficit; b) reduce unemployment in Europe and c) to enable the less developed countries with high external debts to reduce them.

Contrast this with Labour MEPs Glyn Ford and David Martin's attack on the very concept of an internal market (*New Socialist*, September 1987). This, they patiently explain to what they call 'well-meaning socialists in Europe' would reinforce 'disastrous competition policy of the Community, remove flexibility from governments which try to arrest industrial decline'. Once again there is an unsubstantiated pessimism over what can be done at the European level in terms of industrial and regional policy or in terms of social policies and an increasingly absurd notion of what national governments can do and will do.

In the workshop on 'defending workers' rights' Michael Meacher listed measures 'a future Labour government would take' but not once did he envisage an extension of community law so as to enshrine a charter of workers' rights which 'an eventual Conservative government' (this, alas, is what tends to be the case) would be unable to overturn. It was left to Christine Crawley MEP, arch-enemy of the Treaty of Rome and all it stands for, to point out, grudgingly but honestly, that it was thanks to the sex equality clauses of the Treaty and the work of the hated Brussels Commission that women have been able to defend some of their rights against Conservative attacks.

In one of the closing speeches Gianni De Michelis (whose linguistic skills were good enough to enable him to be as blunt in English as he is in Italian) urged the European left to follow the example of both Gorbachev in the USSR and Deng in China. The official silence and the lack of new thinking among European socialists contrasted dramatically with the new attitudes developing in Moscow and Peking where there was ample evidence of serious efforts to give new answers to new questions.

> ***'The silence and lack of new thinking among European socialists contrasts dramatically with the new attitudes in Moscow and Peking'***

De Michelis added that he understood the problems of the Labour Party in trying to overcome traditional thinking but the crash of '87 had provided a new opportunity and the 1989 elections to the European parliament could be the terrain for co-operation.

His own party, he announced, was going to circulate a letter to all socialist and social democratic parties urging them to organise a debate with the same agenda to take place at the same time in each of the member countries. They will not all say the same things but it would be a modest attempt at co-ordination. One of the aims would be to demonstrate to public opinion that the European labour movement has the courage and the will to be innovative and to think out a joint European strategy.

There was plenty of realism last weekend in the Holloway Road but there was also some enthusiasm and some hope. It's funny what a jolly good stock exchange crash can do for the left. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BIRMINGHAM SIX

Testing a country's sense of justice

CORINNA ADAM *reports on the opening of an appeal which examines whether or not there has been 'a terrible error'*

> This may involve a readiness to face up courageously to the fact that our system of justice, which ought to act in perfect fairness between the Crown and the citizen, has perpetrated a terrible error.
> — Lord Gifford QC, addressing the Appeal Court in the case of the Birmingham Six

THE 'TERRIBLE ERROR' — that six Irishmen have been wrongfully imprisoned for 13 years for the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974 — will have far-reaching implications if Lord Chief Justice Lane and Lord Justices O'Connor and Stephen Brown, now sitting at the Old Bailey, do not set it right. Those will stretch beyond the intense suffering of those involved, beyond London and Birmingham to Ireland, to America and possibly to the European Court. And since, like the Dreyfus case, the liberal establishment is now lined up against the illiberal one, they will go deep into British society too.

The campaign for the Birmingham Six (Hugh Callaghan, Patrick Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker) limits its aims to purely getting the men released; but it has invited foreign observers who see no such limitations on their actions. In the first week these included two Americans, Massachusetts State Senator Frank Doris and distinguished trial lawyer Michael G. Dowd. Other powerful Irish-Americans are expected in the next weeks and — particularly in the run-up to the Presidential election — no doubt they, too, will go home to argue that there should be an end to the extradition of fleeing Irish 'politicals' to British courts where, as leading English lawyers have also said, 'No Irishman can expect justice.'

Beaten out

The Irish Ambassador, Michael O'Rourke, officially representing his government, has been sitting in Court 12, as have John Hume of the SDLP, Senator Pascal Mooney of Fianna Fail, Bishop Daly of Derry (who has paid pastoral visits to the men and is utterly convinced of their innocence), with other clergy and politicians from both sides of the border. Although extradition from Eire to the United Kingdom is not strictly an issue at this hearing, the observers — looking at the 1 December (first) deadline for Eire's ratification of the Extradition (European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism) Act — are making it so. And for only the second time in a British court, there is a (Greek) observer from Amnesty International.

Lawyers are already working on the possibility, if the appeal fails, of taking the case to the European Court. It is a procedure better known in Ireland than here, where little or no coverage is given, for instance, to the many Continental criminal cases dealt with at the Court. The theory is that you have first to exhaust all legal avenues within your own country, which might mean seeking leave to appeal to the House of Lords on a point of law. One great difficulty, too, is that the men would be claiming 'derogation of constitutional rights' — i.e. that their original confessions to the bombings were beaten out of them by the police. If the Appeal fails it means that they have not proved that this happened.

The evidence that it did happen includes the fact that the witnesses to it, a former policeman and a woman police cadet, both said they 'didn't have the guts', were 'just too frightened' to say so earlier. Religion is important in this case, not only in the continual supportive presence of Irish priests in and outside the courtroom, but for Mrs Joyce Lynas. She is the former police cadet who was warned in phone calls to 'remember you have a family' — she has two children — and is now a fundamentalist Protestant. She made the decision to risk prosecution for perjury, and other reprisals, after talking to 'a minister of my Church' — and some sleepless nights. She then admitted that she had seen a prisoner being kneed in the groin and told 'this is what we do to fucking murdering Irish bastards'. Worse was said, but 'it was so vile I would rather not repeat it.'

Putting it right

Last week, before the massacre at Enniskillen in Northern Ireland on Remembrance Sunday, the appellants' lawyers applied for a retrial. (It was refused, but not finally as has been mistakenly assumed.) Even then private doubts were expressed as to whether this would necessarily help the six men. There is still great residual hatred over the bombings — overt in Birmingham (and how much more since last Sunday would have spun off on them?). In a discussion on Radio 4's *The World This Weekend*, the day before the Appeal opened, relatives of victims, and crippled survivors of the Mulberry Bush and Tavern bombings were outspoken in their dislike and disapproval of the whole appeals procedure. So far as they were concerned the killers had been caught: some thought it was a pity they had not been hanged, and they wanted no doubts raised in their minds as to whether retribution had been exacted on the right people.

Despite Chris Mullin's convincing description in *Error of Judgment* (Poolbeg) of his discovery of the real murderers, this feeling is understandable and psychologically instructive. Even before Enniskillen, the prisoners' lawyers were debating the pros and cons of retrial versus appeal. They could apply again for a new trial once all their fresh evidence is in — evidence of the physical and mental assaults in the police station which led to the inconsistent confessions, evidence of Chief Superintendent George Reade's newly discovered 'schedule' on which he tried to patch the 'voluntary' statements into something approaching a convincing pattern, evidence that Dr Frank Skuse's tests for nitroglycerine on the men's hands were totally incompetent. (Dr Skuse was later retired from the police force on grounds of 'limited efficiency'.)

> ***'Powerful Irish-Americans will no doubt go home to argue that in British courts, as leading English lawyers have also said, "No Irishman can expect Justice"'***

The choice is difficult — or was before Enniskillen — because the record of the Court of Appeal, as Bob Woffinden shows in his excellent new book *Miscarriages of Justice* (Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95) is an unhappy one. Woffinden describes the 1968 Criminal Appeal Act as 'laudable, but doomed' — doomed in many ways, such as by police and crown prosecutors' intransigence, and by appeal judges' dilemmas, which can inevitably seem nit-picking to laypeople. For instance, when presented with fresh evidence, should they consider 'the mind of the jury' at the time of the trial? In Stafford & Luvaglio v DPP (1975, 3 All ER 762), much quoted in this case, Viscount Dilhorne said 'I do not think that it is established as a rule of law that in every fresh evidence case the court must decide what they think the jury might or would have done if they had heard that evidence.' Nevertheless, over the past few days in Court 12 we have seen how the Lord Justices have an absolute right to rule 'irrelevant' evidence which can seem to a layperson very relevant indeed.

The case may last for two or more weeks longer. The men in the dock look calm, healthy — and well-dressed, in a variety of outfits bought in some cases by the young adult relatives who were at primary school when their fathers or uncles or cousins went inside, and who want them to have pride in themselves as they sit there.

The epigraph of Bob Woffinden's book is a quote from Cyril Connolly in 1961:

> The test of a country's justice is not the blunders which are sometimes made but the zeal with which they are put right. □

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

There is a tradition that behind all the religions and philosophies, there is a vein of persisting truths which never change. They relate to the very nature of the Cosmos, both on the vast and the minute scale. We are in and of that nature. Makes you think — Yes?

For more details write to:
The Blavatsky Trust (B)
P.O. Box 16, London W3 6HS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ESSAY

Sharpest Pen in the West

For 15 years, the British writer **ALEXANDER COCKBURN** *has poured out a stream of reportage, reviews and books from and on the US, which he has made his home. In columns for papers as diverse as the* **Wall Street Journal** *and New York's* **The Nation,** *Cockburn has stuck to a self-imposed task of illuminating the darker corners of the American heart and mind with brilliance and wit. A collection of his journalism is now published in the UK and the US under the title* **Corruptions of Empire***. *Below, we publish two of the many fine pieces to be found therein*

Pull the Plug

About twice a month someone asks me what sort of word processor, and even what sort of program, I use, and I answer that I don't have a word processor or a program and I rely on a variety of typewriters, both manual and electric. When I tell my fellow writers or editors with whom I do business that I don't have a word processor, they wag their heads and register the surprise appropriate to an admission that I prefer to go about town with no trousers on. They become earnest and advise me on the sort of machine I should buy. They have the zeal of evangelizing Christians, and only when I start seriously to explain my reservations about the role of word processors and video display terminals in intellectual production do they turn to outright ridicule. They stare at me with the severity of a 19th-century English judge transporting Luddites to Botany Bay and say heavily — this is always their final shot — 'Once you try it, you'll never want to use anything else.'

I've put up with this for about six years now, almost always — particularly in the early days — slightly on the defensive. The left has always been in something of a quandary about technology: thumbs up to the machines that relieve us of drudgery, increase productivity, and release mankind into cultivated enjoyment of the social surplus; thumbs down to machines that degrade quality, deny — without appropriate compensation — employment, attenuate experience. On the one hand, the pastoral gentility of the mixing bowl and the wooden spoon, on the other, the time-shrinking whir of the Cuisinart: here the robot, there the unemployment line.

The trouble is that the left, or what I might call 'our crowd', usually doesn't know very much about technology and therefore manages either to overestimate or underestimate the quality of its specific applications. When it comes to military affairs, our crowd has a touching faith in the precision and reliability of the electronic gadgetry developed by the arms companies, solemnly parroting their salespeople's preposterous claims (such as that a submarine-launched ballistic missile can hit a Russian silo at a range of 5,000 miles). And on the other side of the ledger, our crowd is often oblivious to the more subtle threats technology poses. No one wants to look as though he or she is opposed to progress. When Alf Landon ran against FDR in 1936, Landon and his supporters hotly denounced Social Security. 'Those numbers,' they said, 'are the numbers of the modern police state. They will follow you from cradle to grave. They are the emblems of totalitarianism!' How our crowd laughed!

And just as our crowd welcomed transistorised amplifiers which produce worse sound than the old tubes, and now hurry to buy compact discs which produce worse sound than the old records, so too have they — or those with the remotest occasion to use them — welcomed the word processor and the computerised office almost without reservation.

> *'The trouble is that the left, or what I might call "our crowd", usually doesn't know very much about technology and therefore manages either to overestimate or underestimate the quality of its specific applications'*

I suppose I should add for the record that I am not against *any* use of computers; nor am I hostile to some time-saving, knowledge-expanding data bases. I am not an enemy of the 20th century, but we have to retain the necessary discrimination. It goes without saying that there has always been a strong element of cargo cult among devotees of the word processor. Poorer by some $2,000 or $3,000, writers crouch reverently before their new deployment of screen, computer, and printer as though the mere arrival of this equipment, massive and unsightly on the desk, will prompt an effortless flow of literary production. By way of justification, they then launch into the familiar patter. I heard it just the other day from my friends Ellen Ray and Bill Schaap, publishers of *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, and mustard-keen on their word processors. With pity, Bill eyed the five typewritten pages of a column I happened to have with me. 'With a word processor,' he cried, 'you could *move paragraphs around*'.

They always say this. To which the answer is twofold. With scissors and Scotch tape, the same miracles of paragraph transfer can be achieved, and indeed achieved far more easily. Suppose I am reading over a draft of a 15-page typewritten article. I can glance rapidly from page to page, from beginning to end and back. The word processor doggedly 'scrolls' his or her article on the VDU screen in a process that is far more cumbersome and time-consuming, and if he or she wants to get an overview of the article it has to be printed out, thus turning it back into a despised typewritten product. So then the writer makes marks on the printout, enters these corrections into the word processor, prints the article out again, thus deriving the dubious gratification of being able to furnish his or her editor with *an entirely clean manuscript*, which this editor has now been conditioned to expect as his or her due.

All the while our word processor is writing worse than he or she did before. Computers degrade the prose style of those who use them. The syntax takes on a listless quality and, as they do in extemporaneous human speech, the rhythms become nerveless. The reason is surely that what is produced is not script but transcript, the self-indulgent flow of someone assured that the cursor, bustling about the screen, amending, transposing, obliterating, is emulating the justice and finality of properly accomplished prose. But the emulation is spurious. There is never finality in the display terminal's screen, but an irresponsible whimsicality, as words, sentences, and paragraphs are negated at the touch of a key. The significance of the past, as expressed in the manuscript by a deleted word or an inserted correction, is annulled in idle gusts of electronic massacre.

Thus far we have been talking of the writer, now immobilised in the garret by this supposedly time-saving machinery. But the essential function of the computer is revealed in group production, as on a newspaper or magazine. Over the past few months I've been observing all the usual depressing signs of conversion to electronic procedures at *The Nation***. The villain of the party here is, as always, the publisher or office manager who has nothing better to do with his time than attend computer courses and spend long days in confabulation with salespeople and advisors from the industry. It is he who speaks of the 'inevitability' of conversion and who wags his head comically at anyone saying everything seemed to be working OK in the first place. So at *The Nation*, first the accounting was computerised, with the result that it took longer to get paid.

The aim in view is of course productivity, in whose cause are recruited the procedures of de-skilling typical of the development of mass production in the early 20th century. At the moment I, a *Nation* writer, furnish my copy to an editor, who gives it scrutiny, comments on external and internal contradictions, logical fallacies, libels on the Catholic church, and processes it on to the typesetter, who punches it in

Verso, £14.95

** The New York radical weekly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on his or her Computron. The galley proof is then perused by intern-researchers, by the copy department, by me, and finally by the editor, who assembles all the corrections and returns the proof to the typesetter, who inserts the corrections and produces a fresh text that is pasted up on the sheets awaiting the photographer and ultimately the printer.

The dream of the publisher is naturally to abolish these varying and important functions unpleasantly reminiscent of a medieval guild by having the article punched once, preferably by the originating writer, after which point all changes are made on the screen in a series of electronic interpolations. To the dismay of union representatives and the joy of management, role and function become blurred as the galley ceases to have a history, revealed in the discrete markings of the various parties. Instead the galley becomes a notation of an electronic collective, which views the article as a series of VDU screen bytes, thus perceiving it in a manner entirely different from either that of the writer (until he or she becomes a puncher) or the reader (until he or she in the end becomes part of the electronic collective by reading the article on a television screen).

Thus is the mind industrialised. The form of the article is emended by the dictates and limitations of the tiny viewing screen. Its syntax and spelling are supervised by the appropriate program. The producers are chained to terminals that are physically dangerous, and indeed susceptible of being monitored by supervisors for evidence of productivity, worker enthusiasm, and so forth. On an amplified scale we have here the mode of production of a modern newspaper, whose reporters in the field carry smaller terminals with tiny display screens, through which they communicate to headquarters. Under such conditions they cease to be writers in any traditional sense of the word and become information inputters, in a properly industrialised fashion. Extended syntax and narrative structure become a thing of the past and with them disappears the possibility of any ample individual vision. The editor's authority is vastly increased. The collective — with obscured lines of individual responsibility — gains power at the expense of the individual writer. As Hans Magnus Enzensberger remarks in *The Industrialisation of the Mind*: 'The mind industry's main business and concern is not to sell its product; it is to "sell" the existing order, to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination by man, no matter who runs the society and no matter by what means. Its main task is to expand and train our consciousness — in order to exploit it.'

The day I bought my sixth typewriter, my daughter and I visited the Huntington Library near Pasadena, California. Halfway down the spacious public gallery, replete with its Gutenberg Bible, Shakespeare folios, early maps, and other testaments to the rise of capitalism, there is a case containing a scrap of paper on which is a letter written by Andrew Jackson. Dated November 2, 1813, Major General Jackson's note is an injunction to massacre. He commands General John Coffee to destroy the Creek Indians in Tallahatchie, in the Mississippi Territory, and 'under a discreet officer . . . to envelop any Indians that may be spying on the south east bank . . . you will in performing this service keep the greatest order and observe the greatest circumspection.' Coffee descended upon the Creek Indians, murdered the braves, 186 in all, and captured 84 women and children. President Jackson adopted one of the orphans. There, in the case in the Huntington Library, is the order, with deletions and rephrasings scored on it by Jackson. Down the years it has carried the testament of individual responsibility and, though the author did not see it that way, individual guilt. It is not a record that, in the age of electronic, industrialised consciousness, would have ever survived.

First published in Mother Jones, *Nov. 11, 1986.*

Secret Conversations with Hitler

The enigma of the Hitler diaries was solved on Friday when a man called identifying himself as Adolf Hitler and requesting an interview. Hitler told me he had been doing part-time political consultancies and translation work in recent years, most recently on US Ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick's staff, and as a rewrite man and headline writer on a New York newspaper he declined to identify.†

In subsequent interviews and examinations, Hitler's authenticity was verified by a number of experts including a German-born Brooklyn dentist, an accountant who worked for *Der Stürmer* and Madam Sosostris, the famous clairvoyant much favoured by the Nazi high command in the late 1930s, now working in the West Village.

Voluntarily submitting to a series of tests gruelling to a man of his years, Hitler passed with flying colours, effortlessly chanting passages from Wagner, the battle order of the Wehrmacht in 1939 and substantial portions of the works of Gobineau.

In our meetings Hitler dressed casually, but with a certain panache. He betrayed little sign of the physical disabilities — palsy, motor inhibition, drooping eyelid, slurred speech — noted by intimates in the bunker.

He had, he said, decided to come forward in order to expose the 'degenerate drivel and outright forgery' sponsored by *Der Stern* magazine. In three frank interviews, interspersed with copious readings from the journal he intermittently dictated, Hitler set the record straight on a life that, as he said, 'has been grotesquely misunderstood'.

It was after a late-night dinner at Elaine's that Hitler admitted the existence of his journals, kept on an occasional basis from the late 1920s, bringing out the transcripts and several manuscript pages over schnapps. These pages have been authenticated by handwriting experts. Spectrographic analysis reveals the paper to have been made from linden pulp of the correct period.

Some entries:

January 30, 1933: 'Chancellor at last! I am very excited! This is the biggest day in my life so far! I had feared that after the tumultuous events of the morning and afternoon, twilight would bring with it a spasm of that *Weltschmerz* which has afflicted me since the shameful provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were imposed upon the Fatherland. But my spirits held up. Göring is very jolly though I mistrust him, particularly for his gross drug-taking habits about which the cunning Himmler keeps me informed.'

June 30, 1934: 'Night of the Long Knives, as historians will call it. Rid of Röhm at last! I shall be accused of excessive ruthlessness, but R was a sexual pervert and a security risk . . . I shall be Führer and Reich Chancellor by the end of the summer. Eva looked wonderful tonight. I pray she will soon be pregnant. Perhaps then we could abandon the world-historical stage and retire to a little hamlet in the mountains where I could get on with my novel and Eva devote herself to the joys of motherhood.'

September 3, 1939: 'England has declared war. Frankly, I'm surprised and not a little perturbed. I wouldn't put it past Churchill and the war party to get America into the war, with some trick like the Lusitania routine.'

Looking up from this diary entry, Hitler sighed: 'That was my mistake, my greatest mistake. I should have invaded England in 1940. I had no idea how weak the place was until I read Churchill's memoirs after the war. What about the Eastern Front, you are going to ask. Well, if I had sent the Gross Deutschland Division farther forward, redeployed the Hungarian and Rumanian units and allowed Von Paulus to make a break for the west earlier, things might have been very different'.

'What, aside from Stalingrad and the failure to invade in 1940, were your greatest disappointments?'

'Leni Riefenstahl not getting an Oscar! We were all shattered by that. That was a very personal disappointment of course. The reason was obvious naturally. The Jewish émigrés in Los Angeles.'

'What achievements of yours have been underrated?'

'Schacht could teach Volcker a thing or two. Low interest rates, heavy government funding, large scale public works . . . that's the way forward. After the Autobahns we had them build the Siegfried Line. That's how to keep the lumpen lice loyal.'

Hitler says he misses Berlin but finds New York 'the most exciting city in the world' and intellectually very stimulating. 'Culturally,' he says, 'the trend has been encouraging over the last decade as the irresponsibility and defeatism of the late '60s is replaced by a new sense of destiny. New York is obviously a genetic garbage dump, but every garden needs its compost heap. I study the trends and I am content.'

Hitler laughingly discounts suggestions that he will enter politics. 'I am too old and even now too controversial.' He hints though that he will soon be giving his agent a new, updated version of *Mein Kampf* and a postscript about the final days of the Reich. Simon & Schuster is 'very interested'.

'The time is just about right', Hitler ruminated aloud as we stood outside on Second Avenue. 'The cataclysm of 1945 was only prelude to the cataclysm that must inevitably come soon'.

First published in Village Voice, *May 3, 1983.*
† *New York Post*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

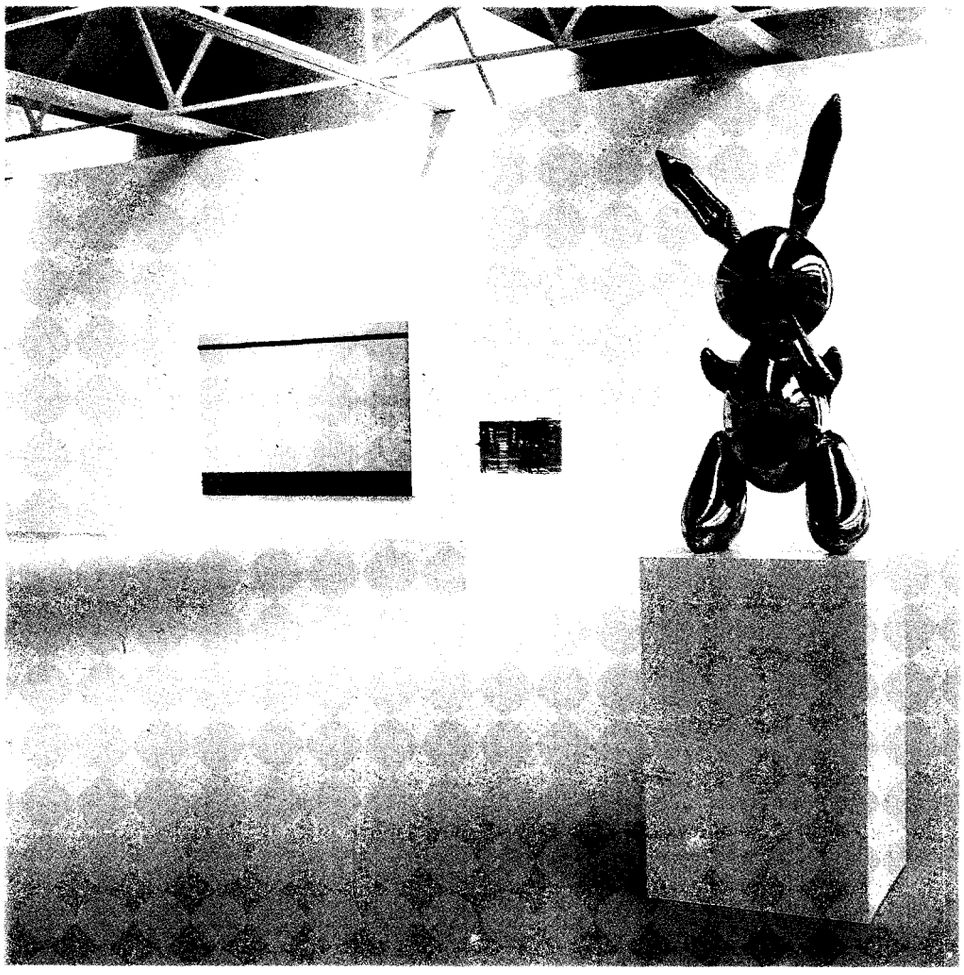
ARTS

ART

No right to stand and stare

James Hall

New York Art Now
The Saatchi Collection, 98A Boundary Rd, London NW8



Jeff Koons' 'Rabbit': run, viewer, run

A WELL KNOWN art historian once said that the English mistake a love of landscape for a love of art. In other words, we prefer an art that serves the *idea* of landscape — one that is concerned with opening up space (Turner; Constable) rather than creating an enclosing architecture (David; Raphael). Put in terms of a flattering politics of landscape: we love liberty and loathe prisons.

The current exhibition of New York art from the Saatchi collection *appears* to exemplify just such a freedom of manoeuvre — the gallery and the works to which it plays host generate the feeling of limitless space; even the restrictive title *New York Art Now* is illusory, because the show will continue into the as-yet undisclosed future. Thus the Saatchi collection effortlessly transcends both space and time.

The gallery itself, despite having white Modernist walls, belongs to our most enduring tradition of landscape architecture, that of the picturesque. The building is symmetrical only in parts because additions were made over the years. The floors are at different levels; there are no flat roofs or ceilings, but a variety of glass roofs and skylights that ensure plentiful supplies of natural light — so the works can be experienced in all weathers and seasons. The explanatory leaflet dramatically unearths the ancestor of these organic elements: 'The site was originally a market garden.'

As for the works, these resemble the objects once found in the most picturesque English landscapes — follies. These were ornamental replicas of some fashionable structure or significant object, ranging from pint-sized pyramids to pineapple-houses. Occupying a spectacular site they were both a focal point and milestone to help gauge the vast expanse and wealth of an estate. In her book *Follies and Grottoes*, Barbara Jones writes: 'The setting of the follies is as remarkable as the architecture . . . Follies come from money and security and peace; poor men rarely build them. Leisure and comfortable income are needed either to follow fashion or to promote the malaise and boredom that breed the more eccentric follies.'

Jeff Koons' 'Rabbit', emblazoned like a coat-of-arms on the front of the catalogue, is a stainless steel replica of an inflatable plastic rabbit, eating a carrot. The steel is so highly polished that it reflects the surrounding area. The art object becomes a camouflaged chameleon that cannot be discovered without also discovering its landscape. Koons' other stainless steel replicas symbolise more obviously the leisurely trips that reveal the luxury of limitless landscapes — a steam train and a portable drinks-case.

As follies tend to be copies of both things and styles, their originality comes from their setting. Most of the works in this show make no attempt to be original in themselves: Haim Steinbach distributes found objects such as clocks, shoes and footballs on shelves; Robert Gober makes sinks; Philip Taaffe makes a point of plagiarising the likes of Bridget Riley and Barnett Newman. All this derives, of course, from Marcel Duchamp, the first exponent of the art gallery folly. His 'ready-mades', whether urinals, bottleracks or bicycle wheels, were an attempt to divert attention from individual objects to the situation in which they found themselves.

With this intention, there can be little appeal on an intimate level. As the works are involved with giving the sensation of space, too close a scrutiny would spoil the panoramic view. And a variety of techniques is used to discourage over-insistent observation. Some works are optically repulsive: Peter Halley uses Day-Glo colours, and Koons rows of fluorescent lights, both too dazzling to look at for long; Philip Taaffe and Ross Bleckner use stripes in an Op-art way that induces nausea if you try to get them into focus; Haim Steinbach uses a wave machine to sea-sickly effect.

There is even picturesque significance in the distribution of the titles of the works. Typed in tiny, black letters, with no consistent pattern to determine their distance from the host object, they are all too easily lost in the expanses of white wall. It is yet another way of increasing the problem of looking at the work, the sense of not comfortably belonging, this ocular toing-and-froing between the exhibits and their context.

Nor is it only a question of the eye commuting backwards and forwards. Despite the yawning acreage of the gallery, there is nowhere to sit. Some people perch on the steps that lead up to the other galleries, but this permits only the panoramic view. It also means that the seated spectator is an obstruction and an interference. You are meant to keep moving. A few Astroturf mats would do nicely.

The *real* political message of all this restless picturesqueness is that, if you fail to keep your distance, if you look as though you might be settling, you will be an unwelcome trespasser in the land of the blessed and beautiful. Squire Saatchi's landscape is emptily spacious because of so many evictions: the viewer is constantly driven on and away. Perhaps there was more sustenance to be had in the days of the market garden. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THEATRE

Russia with nurse

Victoria Radin

Tomorrow Was War
BORIS VASSILIEV *Lyttelton*
The Rover
APHRA BENN *Mermaid*
The Thousand Cherries of Yoshitune
ENNOSUKE'S KABUKI THEATRE *Sadlers Wells*
Hamletmachine
HEINER MÜLLER *Almeida*

VANESSA REDGRAVE'S tremolo fluttered through the itching foam-rubber torture device affixed to our ears, her sentences falling over one another as she strove rather too conclusively to keep pace with the Russian dialogue on stage. At one point in a blessed moment of near-silence, all that assailed us were the actors' voices and that of a dimly-heard man to whom Ms Redgrave asserted that yes, she *could* fit in all the speeches; whereupon we were off again, the caressing waterfall of the actress's voice, spun out breathlessly for over three hours, giving itself increasingly to acting out the play in the cadences of her own decidedly particular style.

Thelma Holt, who organised International Theatre 87 at the NT — for which I shall be forever grateful — eschewed simultaneous translation for the classical works produced by Peter Stein, Ingmar Bergman and the Japanese Ninagawa Company, but caved in when it came to the Russian Mayakovsky troupe. Their **Tomorrow Was War** is a new play and a theatre of words, if ever there was one, and she is right to have done so. However, there is a strange and potentially harrowing intimacy that builds between the chair-bound spectator at a foreign-language play, headset to the ears, and her/his simultaneous translator, which may be compared to that of a patient being fed on a drip by a nurse. One is grateful for the potion but suspicious of its contents; the procedure hurts and at times one wishes it could be shut off and leave one in peace.

But for other reasons *Tomorrow Was War*, adapted by Boris Vassiliev from his own novella, must be accounted the dud of the NT's otherwise glowing international season. It was Holt, in her tenure at the Roundhouse, who was the champion of the extravagantly daring Georgian Rustaveli Company; while other sources recently brought to London from the Soviet Union two pieces by Yuri Lubymov, exponent of a visually oriented 'poor theatre', and Anatoli Vasiliev and Company's exquisitely elegiac philosophical environmental play *Cerceau*. Glyndebourne is currently touring *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* (for review see *NS* 6 Nov.), a free adaptation of a Boris Pasternak novella by Craig Raine. Next to all of these and to Russia's remarkably vigorous dramatic activity, *Tomorrow* seems outrageously inadequate.

The play is a portrait, set in 1940, of the adolescents of a certain Class 9B and two of their teachers. Framed as the memory of one of the two pupils who survived the forthcoming war, it asks us to applaud their subsequent bravery (and tacitly to wonder, with the author, where that went). It also urges — perhaps a nobler task for Russian audiences — that we hiss the rigid moral codifications of Stalinism and cheer the liberal, humanitarian point of view. Such plot and

COMMENT

A STUDENT in my class at drama school was once taken aside by the verse-speaking tutor (we're talking 19 years ago here) and told that it might be a nice idea if, for her end-of-term poetry performance, she selected something from her 'own culture'. She might, it was added, enhance the effect with national costume.

This student had connections with West Africa; I think she may even have been born there. Her 'culture', however, was so much that of the English upper middle classes that until that moment I'd assigned her to a pigeonhole similar to my own: we were both continuously told to relax, that we moved like constipated robots; we were both required to take extra lessons to rid us of our 'hame kinties' accent.

But black she was and white I was and the tutor's intentions may not have been altogether crass. Perhaps she was aware of the growing racial pride and self-confidence among black Britons — Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* was even then crossing the Atlantic; 'Young, Gifted and Black' was a couple of years away from the British top ten — and wanted her pupil to plug into them as an alternative to Wordsworth.

Or perhaps she was being brutally pragmatic: the student had a less than easy time ahead. Not only was she extremely unlikely ever to be cast in 'starring' roles, but those background characters on which able-bodied, white, male actors can sharpen their teeth — all those messengers and soldiers and rhubarb-ing citizens — were not about to welcome a player of her sex and colour. She had better start learning to present herself as a noble savage, or a comic servant, from the start.

Nineteen years on, things have, on one side, got better for Britain's black performers. There are black theatre groups (Carib, Temba) and black film workshops (Cheddo, Sankofa) which, although hobbled by having to carry the entire black British experience, do at least allow their actors the dignity of representing their reality. It's true that they could disappear tomorrow. Despite last week's promise by Richard Luce, the arts minister, that central-government funding of the arts will increase by 17 per cent in the next three years, the Tories' insistence on linking grants, via Incentive Funding, with business sponsorship — and their enfeebling, at the same time, of local-authority arts-funding powers — bode badly for 'minority', 'political' and 'ethnic' arts. But at least there has emerged on the fringes, in the last couple of decades, a strong and specifically black artistic expression.

What *hasn't* happened — although I should argue that it is at least as important — is substantial inclusion of black characters in mainstream, popular drama; or the casting of black actors in parts where race is irrelevant to plot (though see this week's review of *The Rover* for a current exception to the rule).

Apala Chowdhury, in this month's *Marxism Today*, writes with pleasure of the *Brookside* spin-off, *Damon and Debbie*. 'The series', she says, 'introduces Asian characters to the *Brookside* plot for the first time in five years.' But, her article also asks, how come that it's such a lonely example? British soaps, unlike *Dynasty* or *Dallas*, are supposed to 'reflect the state of the nation' and the state of the nation has been multi-racial — well, for the last three centuries in fact, but even in popular understanding since the end of WWII.

Chowdhury, although critical of *Eastenders*' racial stereotypes, gives that soap at least some marks for effort. For the failure of the rest she blames the writers — yet they cannot take the blame alone. Television playwrig'.t Jill Hyem* once told me the following story. For their series *Tenko*, which concerned the fortunes of a group of British women interned by the Japanese in WWII, she and her co-writer Anne Valery specifically requested that the crowd scenes include people of different races. When they turned up on the set, almost every single extra was white. Casting directors, actors' agents, the policy-forming people: everyone concerned continues to display a depressing lack of imagination, a depressing surfeit of arrogance.

This is, of course, much more than an employment problem. We are *all* of us being made schizophrenic by the absence from popular drama of any but token, stereotypical blacks — just as, I should add, we are being driven mad by the funny foreigners, daffy women, mincing queens and invisible disabled with which our screens and the West End stage continue, remorselessly, to be peopled. None of it bears the remotest relation to the worlds in which we otherwise exist — and it's not just a matter of stereotypes being, inherently, less than 'real'. Of course they are that, but they do serve a function — in some art and in most entertainment — whenever they set up echoes of truths that we recognise. But the stereotype of a *stereotype* is the corpse of a rotting corpse. What is being projected at us is not a distortion of the way we are now, but the way the establishment saw us some decades ago.

I spent some time the other night listening to a radio phone-in programme, on which caller after caller complained about the state of contemporary TV soaps. There was, it's true, one woman who insisted that she simply loved *'Allo, 'Allo* — and her father had been at Dunkirk, so there — but the vast majority were clearly fed up with the nonsense that we're mostly offered. What was already shameful in 1968 is, today, unforgiveable.

Harriett Gilbert

**Jill Hyem is the author of a chapter in* Boxed In: Women and Television, *ed. Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer, published last week by Pandora.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characterisation as there are concern a despotic form mistress, a kindly, relatively free-thinking headmaster (who is sacked) and the daughter of a high-ranking, quietly dissident official. He believes with Lenin that 'truth mustn't be turned into dogma' (this philosophy came strangely from the lips of our translator) and is shopped and arrested on a false embezzlement charge, whereupon his daughter, the class 'golden girl', commits suicide and the junior Stalinists are converted. I found Vassiliev's own moral black-and-whites manipulative and sentimental; and, for a play which celebrated intellectual freedom, its means of expression was strangely stiff. The performances were passionate but thumping. Lacking the urgency of *Sarcophogus*, the function of *Tomorrow* should be seen as a rather naive exercise in the name of a *glasnost* which is still in the age of the dinosaurs.

The RSC's John Barton, ever a scholarly knitter and weaver, has done a bit of patchwork on **The Rover** (1677) by Aphra Benn, the world's first professional playwright (she needed the money). The consequences are that, instead of Spain, we fetch up in a Spanish colony, where it is plausible that the returning mercenary (Hugh Quarshie), who is one of the romantic leads, should be black. In a rather less vibrant blow against racial stereotyping, so are the surrounding whores and servants; but their presence adds a lift to the proceedings. Benn is now labelled a 'feminist', by which is meant that she sometimes, but not always, used her own eyes to describe the world about her. In this play she allows three sisters (in the freewheeling circumstances of carnival time) the will to pursue their own choice of husband; to take arms against their fate of either an arranged marriage or the nunnery; for one of them stubbornly to opt for the non-marriageable material of a 'Rover'; and, in this version, for another to marry out of her race. The wit is often good, the directorial business (mostly) fitting and the playing excellent. But Benn's failure to develop her observations and Barton's determination to romp where a bit of rumping might have done better conspired to lose my interest well before its natural end.

Ennosuke's Kabuki Theatre, in **The Thousand Cherries of Yoshitune** (a play about a fox) provided a wholly pleasurable reminder of the roots of modern avant-garde performance, while Robert Wilson's multi-layered exposition of Heiner Müller's **Hamletmachine** — a live, minimalist equivalent of *Rashomon* if you like (see *NS* 6 Nov. for fuller review) — was, surprisingly for this extravagant mathematicalist, emotionally dense and, like Ingmar Bergman's *Hamlet*, brought Ophelia centre-stage. A beautifully calculated piece of work.

TELEVISION

And other animals

Hugo Williams

THE BBC'S MOST EXPENSIVE ever production, **A Perfect Spy** (BBC2), opened this week to vast internal acclaim. Gosh, that means it must be even better than **Fortunes of War** (BBC1), their second most expensive ever production.

Fortunes started in on another 'trilogy' last weekend, a somewhat low trick to win back deserters to *The Charmer*. The director has been going around saying we can all have a second chance to tune in to his masterpiece because the whole plot starts all over again in Cairo, so I tried to sit still and not think about who Nigel Havers had got his clammy paws on behind my back.

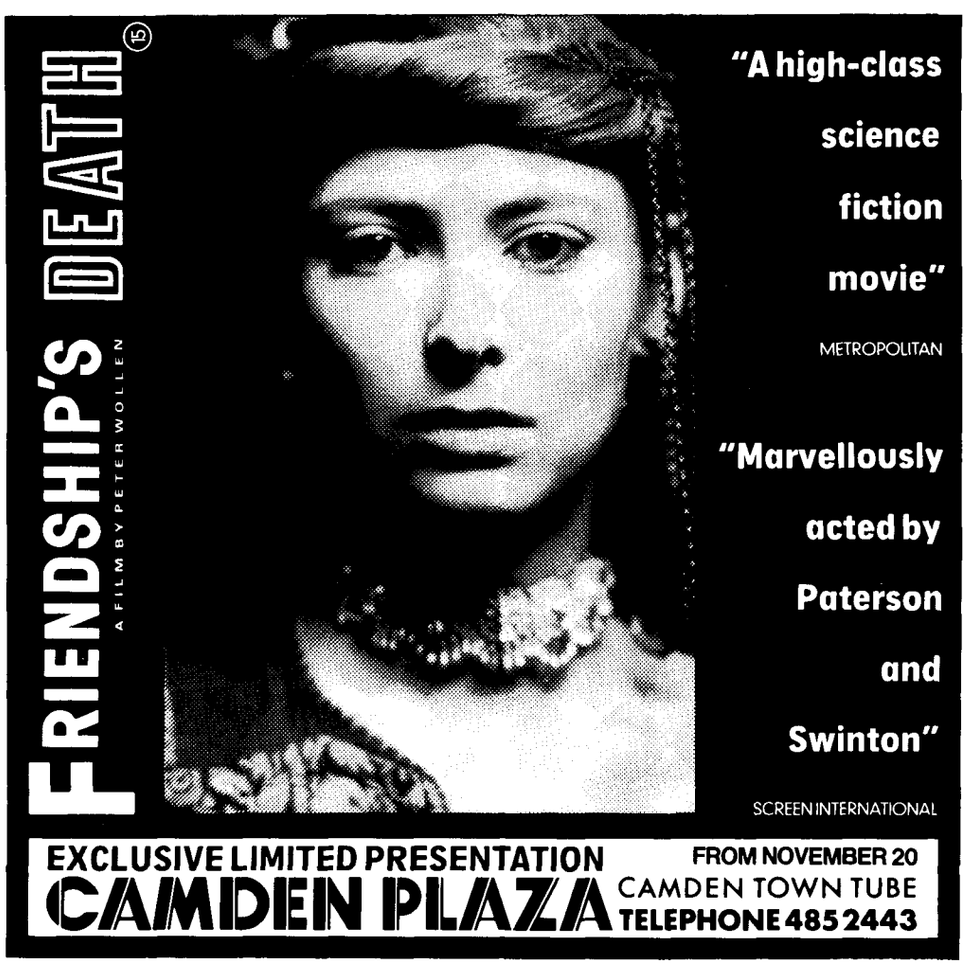
The acting *is* good and Kenneth Branagh's hairstyle, period in its shortness yet modern in its sticking-up-ness, vividly illustrates the production's do-anything-to-please-everyone approach. The camera looks as though it is down on its knees begging all those old familiar faces to exude big-budget, otherwise heads are going to roll. This means that the gift-wrapping has got to be from Harrods, no less. And that means getting that little old ice-cream cart out of the folk museum in Alexandria and having Abdul do that street-cry of his, the one he hasn't done since, oh, 1963 it must be.

Are we impressed? My trouble is I'm thinking about Abdul all the time and what he's getting out of it. Or whether Olivia Manning would have had Harriet climb all the way up the pyramid in the midday sun in order to sing 'Run Rabbit, Run' on top of it if she'd known they were going to take her literally and make Emma Thompson do it for the film. I'd like to see the 90-minute super-8 version some time.

Lawrence Durrell makes a drunken appearance in *Fortunes of War* as the poet 'Adrian Castlebar' (Robert Stephens). He appears again as himself (Anthony Calf), still drunk, but more amusingly so, in **My Family and Other Animals** (BBC1), his brother Gerald's account of his family's idyllic exile in Corfu before the war. The younger brother's portrait of the greedy, lazy poet accidentally eating a scorpion and setting light to his bedroom is finely transferred to the screen, as is that of their blythely drunken mother. 'Miss Maggy is going out with a Turk,' wails the brilliant Brian Blessed as 'Spiro'. 'He will cut her throat!' 'I'll speak to her about it,' drawls Hannah Gordon with a warm smile.

The direction is glancing and understated and the acting marginal, as it should be. The camera is constantly moving on to the next thing, as impatient as the young Gerry to find out everything there is in the world: the trapdoor spider emerging, the scorpion tango-ing with a moth, the pigeon waltzing to Strauss. It is funny, interesting and strange, but it's on at 6.15 on Fridays.

Latterday ruined Corfu was the subject of a new series, **The Travel Show Guide** (BBC2), a welcome holiday assassination programme determined to show the runway beside the swimming pool, the pneumatic drill drowning the sea. To make absolutely sure we knew what we were in for — that the beaches were at best 'not very good', at worst 'very uncomfortable to walk on' — the programme had got sweet jars full of various types of Greek shingle for us to look at, presumably collected by the intrepid young traveller they employed to go out and explore this wasteland on our behalf. Apparently a quarter of a million British teenagers swamp the 90,000 locals every



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

summer, so I was delighted to hear that the mosquitoes are really bad, that there is rubbish everywhere and you aren't allowed to put used toilet paper down the lavatories. If anyone wants the full horrors on all these strip developments, whether they have sunbeds and/or pedalloes and/or runways on their man-made beaches, they can send off £1.50 to the show and they'll send you a photocopy of the entire script.

The presenter of the above show, Paul Heiney, performs the rare trick of appearing at the exact same time in the exact same job on the other side, as linkman for **What On Earth Is Going On?** (C4) — which I did ask myself for a moment. This is a much-needed magazine programme of ecological outrages and rescue crusades, which leaves you with the erroneous impression that there is a postive answer to its aghast title. Last week it was lead. The heavily denied evidence is that 20 years of working at Commonwealth Smelting gives you better than twice the national average chance of getting cancer. The week before it was the barbaric gill nets that are sweeping the Pacific of all living things: 'Nothing can prepare you for the sight of the rain of large fish jettisoned from the gill net boats spiralling 2,000 feet to the bottom.' They showed it to us just the same.

Unhappily for the bank involved, the shot of this holocaust was followed by a little film of some Yuppie-Jim bracing himself for a momentous moment in his young life. 'Opening a bank account didn't bother me!' he tells us, as we see an amusing insert of a silent scream from Alice Faye in *King Kong*. Pretty soon the obnoxious youth, accompanied by other laboriously-researched 'amusing' clips designed to further soften up potential millionaires, has overcome his initial terror of walking into a bank unaided (there may be a clip of Gary Cooper here, ripped off from a far funnier advertisement for beer) '. . . and pretty soon you've got the account number, the cheque book AND the plastic . . . Mind you, some people might find it a bit of a problem . . .' Mind you, some people do: a) the thousands of bankrupt plastic-itis sufferers who wish to God they'd kept their cash under their mattresses; b) the millions who don't have a mattress to put it under. Barclays International, 'the silent scream bank', should know that they are making a lot of people sick with their wheedling, greedy, winsome little film.

MUSIC

Bad trip

Simon Reynolds

'GREBO' is one of this year's Next Big Things that never was. These days nothing the music press discovers/invents ever seems to get off the ground, commercially. But that didn't prevent the major record companies from signing various grebo bands for colossal sums of money — after all, it's good business sense to be prepared just in case there's a return to guitar raucousness and rebel posturing after the last five years' hegemony of suave, sophisticated designer-soul.

Grebo derives from 'greaser' and includes groups like Zodiac Mindwarp and The Love Reaction, Gaye Bykers on Acid, Crazyhead, The Batfish Boys and Pop Will Eat Itself. They and their followers seem to be spawned from the more lumpen, apolitical end of the punk/hippy confluence, that process whereby drop-outs of either stripe are merging into the same squatterland sediment — following the same bands, going to the same festivals, taking the same drugs.

Musically, Grebo involves the final tearing down of the taboos surrounding acid rock and psychedelia, erected by punk. It's the culmination of an erosion of barriers initiated by Goth (a.k.a. positive punk) groups like the Sisters of Mercy, The Mission and All About Eve. The extreme example here is the Cult, who suddenly realised that what they always *really* wanted to be was a hybrid of Led Zeppelin, Steppenwolf and Free. They ditched their guitar effects and produced a coarse, blunt but enjoyable brand of blues metal, adopting as their slogan the exhortation 'boogie til you blow chunks!'

I'm all for letting loose the post-punk stylistic corset, but sadly Grebo has meant only a merging of the dog end of punk (loutishness, inane aggression) with the rump of hippiedom (what they used to call 'hippy gumbo' — grunge, self-neglect, getting blasted). A typical refrain is: 'We don't take ourselves too seriously — we don't take the piss out of rock'n'roll and celebrate it at the same time' — the get-out clause for some rank, unreconstructed sexism. Grebo is undone by its Britishness, its camp attention to period detail.

Take the debut album by **Gaye Bykers On Acid**, *Drill Your Own Hole* (Virgin). The cartoon sensibility (titles like 'TV Cabbage', 'World War 7 Blues', 'After Suck There's Blow'), the ludicrously 'menacing' vocals, forestall full immersion in the noise — you're always made aware that this is play-acting, pastiche mania. Gaye Bykers are *almost* there — the guitars are groovy, although they never plunge completely into either the depths of grunge or the far out reaches of the cosmic, chugging along instead at the ground-level pace they call 'motorik'. But as with most British groups there's an excess of 'attitude', too much *front*: the Billy Idol posturing of frontman Mary Mary (a bloke) is mixed right up in your face.

Over in America, a burgeoning underground of groups are working at the interface between punk and acid rock, in the wake of Sonic Youth, Husker Du, Butthole Surfers, and getting it *right*. These groups are naturally slobbish, rather than artfully dishevelled; take drugs because that's what American kids do, rather than as a pointed lifestyle choice. They're bad talkers, because the US music press (such as it is) doesn't demand that groups sell themselves with rhetoric: in interview they tend to be either mute, or eject analysis, ascribing what they do to instinct. American groups lack the self-consciousness of their British counterparts , are radically self-effacing, literally get wiped out by their own beautiful noise. Vocals are invariably buried at the bottom of the mix.

David Stubbs has dubbed what these groups are creating 'the new guitar air'. The guitar no longer functions as an instrument of self-projection, a weapon (neither phallus *nor* the cutting edge of 'attitude'); instead the fretboard has been opened up into a firmament. The riff has been elided. These US bands don't *deploy* the guitar, they drown in its textures, disappear as individuals.

One Gay Byker drilling his own hole

Dinosaur threaten to be as crucial as Husker Du — the same paradoxical combination of lyrical dejection and noise uplift, a boisterous and vibrant miserabilism. On *You're Living All Over Me* (SST), J. Mascis' small, fallible voice (whose creases are reminiscent of Neil Young) is almost lost beneath a glorious grey swell of noise, songs that surge over the horizon like stormclouds.

The Band of Susans work a similar alchemy, magicking despondency into transcendent noise. Their single 'Hope Against Hope' (Blast First) isn't a song, isn't even a chord sequence, but a layered mass of tones/drones that combine into an incandescent wall of harmonic distortion. Listening, you have the weird sensation of both plummeting free-fall and of ascension. The Band of Susans' borderless miasma of interference is one of the most beautiful, spiritual sounds of '87.

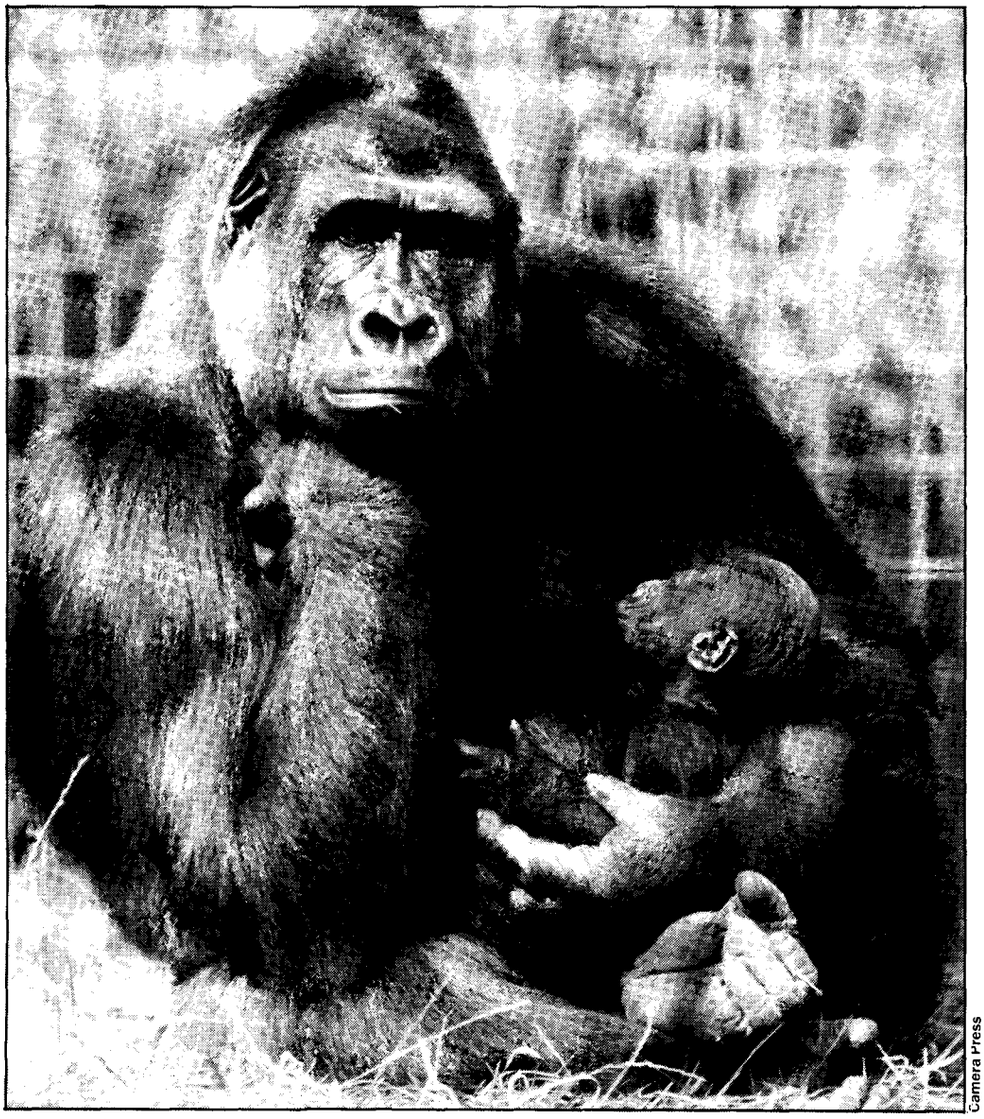
Other bands dwarfed by their own noise — **Live Skull** with *Don't Get Any On You* (Homestead), **Nice Strong Arm** with *Reality Bath* (Homestead) — and, on a slightly different tack, **The Pixies**, a kind of Dadaist garage band, I guess. Garage here connotes 'roughhewn' and 'scrapping' rather than boxed-in; this garage is like the Tardis, bigger on the inside than appears from outside, containing huge vistas for singer Black Francis to roam: a hillbilly Lou Reed perhaps, or Bolan in the wilderness. His spooked voice lets rip a riven, raving stream of consciousness, while the ramshackle songs are nearly caved in by coarse blocks of feedback. *Come On Pilgrim* (4AD) contains songs sung in Spanish ('Vamos' is like 'La Bamba' on mescaline, a tearaway mustang of a song). A brilliant debut.

Unlike Grebo (whose brief is to shock the grown-ups, straights and squares, soil a little corner of pop), the American guitar groups aren't worried about breaking down the doors to mass success. They're concerned with being FAR OUT (celestial or subterranean) and so their disengagement from the level surface of pop is a boon, a mark of achievement.

Judith Williamson is still not well. We apologise for the lack of her Cinema column, but very much hope that it will be back next week.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books



Soft-focus bars, but mother and child are still in prison

Camera Press

CAPTIVITY

What *do* the animals want?

Marek Kohn

Zoo Culture
BOB MULLAN & GARRY MARVIN *Weidenfeld*
£12.95

DATELINE BEIJING, 15 August 1986. Flash! *I'm standing in front of the panda enclosure here in Beijing Zoo* . . . The American tourists watch the pandas, the Chinese watch the Americans . . .

Washington DC, 14 March. Flash! The pandas here have been deluged in Valentine cards. They have 'replied', using a computer . . . Tokyo, 20 July. Visitors aplenty, no photographs permitted . . . Paris, France, 9 October. A panda is up a tree; nobody is looking at it. This is Bob Mullan and Garry Marvin, for Sociology and Social Anthropology respectively.

Actually, the gee-whizzery of the lightning world tour that opens *Zoo Culture* is more restrained than the above and harnessed to illustrate the book's premise: '*that the presentation of captive wild animals in the zoo reveals more about the human societies which have constructed them — and whose members roam freely through them — than about the animals which are confined within them*' (authors' italics). Fair enough, but kicking off with one of those Don't We Have a Lovely Job fanfares so beloved of TV producers is taking liberties with the reader's goodwill.

Thereafter, however, the book settles down into a review of the literature, and of the authors' own research material, with a dependable feel and a handy-looking bibliography. It's the sort of thing Desmond Morris would knock out if he hadn't learned how to make money. Whether its premise really deserves the emphasis it gets is, perhaps, more questionable. The book concludes with a stimulating notion — 'the zoo constitutes a gallery of images constructed by man' — and a notion that sounds incisive but is actually commonplace: 'at the most basic level, zoos are institutions of power.' Looked at one way, this is rather like saying that physical events are basically phenomena associated with changes in energy states.

Looked at another way, such a statement performs a significant intellectual function. With 'power' as the key word, it has the effect of saying: 'our analysis derives from Foucault. This statement is part of the process of establishing the hegemony of that body of theory'. Such influence, naturally, is particularly marked in the sections dealing with the relationship between the confinement of animals and of the insane — both groups shared the defining characteristic of being creatures incapable of reason. Louis XIV had his menagerie at Versailles arranged radially around a central viewing point, rather than dispersed around a park. Foucault speculated that this inspired Jeremy Bentham's seminal design for the Panopticon prison.

Mullan & Marvin pay particular attention to the architecture of zoos. They describe the evolution of the old royal menageries into places of public entertainment. The power of a state to assemble animals could make the zoo into a *tableau vivant* of empire, bringing into proximity creatures from far-flung colonial possessions and the beasts indigenous to — and symbolic of — the imperial heartland. Later, power became problematic. The cages started to trouble the consciences of the public. They gave way to an 'architecture of guilt' in which efforts were made to conceal the physical barriers between animals and humans. Zoos started to be disguised as natural environments. The specification of design principles laid down by the zoo designers Jones & Jones, of Seattle, indicates the extent of this development. 'All structures should appear to grow from the landscape,' it begins. In the plans for Woodland Park, Seattle, Jones & Jones specify a system in which human movement is highly restricted and controlled, while animal movement within the park is not. The gaze is also controlled: humans should not look down on animals, nor should views be uninterrupted (the consequent uncertainty about what visitors can expect to see is a commercial handicap).

Zoos have not maintained a fixed boundary between humans and animals. Montezuma's menagerie contained a collection of human freaks. Carl Hagenbeck, who pioneered the shift towards naturalistic exhibition, displayed Lapps, Eskimos and other human anthropological examples. He also brought indigenous people back to zoos as companions for animals. Two African boys, for example, were clearly felt to have an affinity with the gorilla they accompanied that went beyond a familiarity with the animal's characteristics.

While the racism revealed by this example is its most important political and moral point, I would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argue that it also indicates a fundamental aspect of zoos which Mullan and Marvin almost entirely ignore: the association of animals and children. This is practical as well as structural: children can enjoy outings to the zoo at a very early age, long before most other public attractions become suitable. The names of animals are among the very first things children learn. Contemporary education shapes this association, through everything from schoolbooks to *Blue Peter*, into a remarkably extensive technical knowledge — children who can barely read can rattle off the names of *prehistoric* animals. *Zoo Culture* betrays a fairly low opinion of zoo visitors: it would be interesting to explore how far attitudes among the young have been reshaped by the conservation-conscious education/entertainment complex of recent years and to what extent this is a phenomenon specific to the developed world.

Though *Zoo Culture* plays it down, the other great question is asked continuously by zoo visitors: what is going on inside the heads of the animals themselves? One telling feature of zoo culture — or, rather, that part of it which is self-reflective commentary — is that the animal question, like the 'woman question' of old, is posed only at the discretion of the examiners. □

HISTORY

Pearls before swine

Rowan Williams

The Social Structure of the Early Christian Communities
DIMITRIS J. KYRTATAS *Verso* £24.95

MARX FAMOUSLY ALLOWED that religion was 'the cry of the oppressed creature'; Simone Weil believed that Christianity had a particular gospel for the victims of industrial capitalism since it had begun as a 'religion of slaves'. Here is a readable and well-documented study of Christianity's social 'catchment area' in its early ages which shows fairly clearly that this sort of language is fantasy - more precisely, a kind of protestant Romantic fantasy.

Kyrtatas, a Marxist ancient historian with an earlier training in economics, analyses what can be known of the social composition (not strictly the social *structures*) of the early churches, and finds that the role of slaves is very limited indeed and that the Church largely directed its missionary energies to the articulate and powerful — with a fair degree of success. Church leaders were increasingly drawn from the educated and landowning classes and the patterns of dominance in secular society came to be faithfully mirrored in the Christian communities.

Such slaves as there were tended to be favoured domestic slaves (Malvolio rather than Spartacus) or members of the Imperial household. The really oppressed — slaves in the mines, rural slaves and indentured labourers — do not appear at all. There is a fair representation from the free urban working classes, but this tends towards the upwardly mobile section of the artisan population. When, as rarely, the faith spreads in rural areas (Kyrtatas discusses Egypt at length in this connection) it is mostly among propertied peasants and well-to-do farmers or small landholders (kulaks and rentiers, as you might say).

It is a dispiriting picture of conformism and of myopia in respect of acute human misery. Not only did the Church show no concern to alter the patterns of property-owning and economic power, it might be said to have reinforced them by promising heavenly rewards for patience in the face of injustice. There is an appalling quotation from a Spanish council decreeing a lighter penalty for a woman who beats a slave girl to death than for one who divorces and remarries. Kyrtatas is clear that the Church, in effect, strengthened the institution of slavery, and offered fresh legitimation for it.

In this, of course, he follows closely in the wake of Geoffrey de Sainte-Croix's pioneering work on *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, whose seventh chapter seems to have been the seed of much of this book's first part (Sainte-Croix contributes a very characteristic Foreword). But neither scholar advances a crudely reductionistic thesis: religious phenomena are not to be wrapped up neatly in socio-economic terms and we have to accept that the orthodox understanding of ideology is an anachronism in the late antique world, where the oppressed do not constitute a class in the proper Marxist sense. The point is that the early Church, while not being the ideology either of a proletariat or underclass *or* of a governing elite, works in a particular way within larger social patterns, and works against rather than for social reconstruction and equity. Kyrtatas ends by posing the question of why the internalised representations of religious self-identification became so powerful in late antiquity, so that 'religion' emerges as a social force in an unprecedentedly independent way.

There are places where Kyrtatas accepts outmoded textbook interpretations — as in some of what he says about the 'school' of Alexandria, which more and more scholars are inclined to see as a far less official and continuous institution than was once thought — and he gives surprisingly little attention to the details of the urban churches' composition. His discussion of Egypt is intriguing, and excellent on the economic background, but there is a haziness about the conclusions, caused to some extent by Kyrtatas' unwillingness to distinguish clearly enough between evidence from different periods in the first Christian centuries. There is more of a case than he grants for early links between the community gathered round the bishop in Alexandria and the Coptic-speaking peasantry in the countryside, and he assumes too readily that the only significant Christian presence in rural Egypt was among the Hellenised farmers.

Quibbles aside, this is a useful and stimulating book, only occasionally yielding to the temptation to be a witness for the prosecution. But the question remains: would the early Church have been so pathetically eager to reassure everyone that it was *not* a socially subversive organisation if there had not been ineradicable elements in its language and practice that threatened otherwise? It is more than a matter of internalised identities: the Church was a tangible social phenomenon and the master or mistress was obliged to stand physically alongside the slave — not just to have consoling ideas about equality. The doctrine of the universal image of God had some visible consequences.

Most importantly — and recasting Kyrtatas' concluding question — we have to recognise that it is not that 'religion' suddenly becomes significant, but that religion *appears* for the first time in this period as a phenomenon in its own right, no longer identifiable simply with the sacral legitimation of existing social and kinship bonds. The Church has consistently tried to restore that identification and has as consistently been haunted by its other self, the image of a counter-society, a permanent opposition. What does the Church itself, as a social phenomenon, make possible or thinkable in the long run? If the idea of a critique of all empirical social order is more than utopian irresponsibility, Kyrtatas' bleak view of a Christianity committed to intensifying social stasis needs a counterweight in the recognition of the effects of relativising the social structures and political claims of a once sacred system of state authority. □

MURDER

Anybody's son

Helen Birch

The Lust to Kill
DEBORAH CAMERON and ELIZABETH FRAZER
Polity £25 & £7.95
Jack the Ripper: Summing up the Verdict
COLIN WILSON and ROBIN ODELL *Bantam* £12.95
The Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper
MARTIN FIDO *Weidenfeld* £10.95
The Ripper Legacy
MARTIN HOWELLS and KEITH SKINNER *Sidgwick* £12.95

OUR CULTURE IS OBSESSED by sexual murder. Barely a week goes by without a tabloid headline screaming SEX BEAST KILLS MOTHER OF TWO or some such. True crime literature — from journalistic probings into the mind of the killer, usually written in the wake of a notorious trial, to the more lighthearted chronologies of sexual murder exemplified by Stephen Knight and Colin Wilson — has become a bestselling genre, with sales at least on a par with its overtly fictional counterparts.

Yet our society knows little, understands less, about why men (for it is predominantly men) eroticise killing. We hurry to stick on the common-sense labels 'mad', 'bad', 'evil', 'psychopath', unwilling to look beyond the individual. For most of us, the sex killer is Other, an exotic object of fascination and repulsion. Reading Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Frazer's **The Lust To Kill**, it seems remarkable that feminists, too, although they have been most voluble on the relationship between how masculinity is constructed in our society and male violence against women, have remained virtually silent about the way we categorise and speak about sexual murder.

Cameron and Frazer define sex murder as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

linked to desire. The victim, they argue, 'is a sexual object for the killer . . . true sex killers attack generic objects and not particular persons'. Like the theorists of pornography to whom they are indebted, the focus of their study is masculinity and its relationship to discourses of power and subjectivity.

The majority of murders in the UK are domestic, bound to heterosexuality and the nuclear family. These killings are usually explained away with reference to personal circumstances, pressures, frustrations; but, Cameron and Frazer ask, why is it that so many men respond to frustrations and pressures by killing women? By focusing on the individual background and psyche of the sexual killer, the wealth of specialised discourses which seek to explain the 'lust to kill' — the different schools of criminology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis — preserve his isolation from 'normal' men and from society as a whole. Inured to *gender*, they refuse to see his acts as products of culture. Even those which do acknowledge the social aspect of murder 'have very little to say about the effects of patriarchal power structures on deviant behaviour'. In the modern canon of sex murderers — Denis Nilsen, Peter Sutcliffe, John Christie, Ian Brady, John Steed ('The M4 killer') — they find only one woman, Myra Hindley, whom they rightly treat as a special case.

A basic premise of Cameron and Frazer's approach is that there is no such thing as objective truth. Science, journalism, fiction alike are shaped by the questions that they ask, by the way they interpret and classify information. Showing how a killer's own account of his acts is informed by a broader understanding of how these acts are categorised and understood by society, they quote Denis Nilsen: 'Society has a right to call me a cold, mad killer. No other category fits my results.' Representation then is axiomatic to their project; they identify two dominant strands, the murderer as hero and as deviant, demonstrating how these inflect in both the accounts of individual killers like Nilsen and in fiction, philosophy, criminology and pyschology.

Examining 19th-century 'broadsides' (news-sheets sold at mass gatherings), Cameron and Frazer trace the emergence of the idea of the 'sex beast', analysing the way it is 'codified' in contemporary tabloid journalism, alongside the catchall concept of Jekyll and Hyde — the monster who must also be, as journalist Gordon Burn put it,' Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son'. But the crux of their ideas lies in their analysis of the enduring legacy of de Sade and existential philosophy. Both, they claim, extol the murderer as rebel, libertine, outsider, a transcendent Subject.

Much of this is thorough and persuasive. It's a credit to the authors' lucid and uncluttered style that it also seems obvious. The struggle for Subjecthood, they argue, is contingent upon the construction of an object, and we live in a society where those choices cannot be freely made. But, and it's a big but, like so many feminists who condemn pornography as if the term were self-explanatory, their emphasis on gender means that they elide issues of class and ethnicity — the cultural workings of power which operate both beyond and in conjunction with misogyny.

It's this same investment which leads them to insist on sexual murder as a category of *discourse*, a phenomenon which emerged at the same time as the development of new philosophic and aesthetic concepts and advances in clinical practice and science at the beginning of the 19th century. The idea that the 'Great Tradition' of crime is dependent on the discourses which describe it tells us nothing about how sexual murders were regarded in earlier times, how class, demography and the lack of forms of mass communication shaped those cultures' view of themselves and their killers. It's one thing to dismiss view concepts like the Outsider as part of an homogenised, unified modernity; it's quite another to chart their emergence as part of a convoluted history and *then* to criticise them.

Jack the Ripper typifies Cameron and Frazer's concept of the murderer as Hero, a 'popular folk-devil', who stalked prostitutes through the streets of Dickens' London, his identity as opaque as the swirling fog which clings to our imaginative memories. The bald facts are these: in the autumn of 1888 a man calling himself 'Jack' murdered and mutilated five East End prostitutes. He baited the police, who blundered, and was never caught — the murders mysteriously stopped ten weeks after they began. The Ripper case has spawned a huge literature, beginning with books by those who were actually involved in the case, then moving on to plays, novels, children's rhymes. The heady mix of mystery, a safe historical distance from the brutal facts and the curious mythology which dominates our ideas of working-class Victorian London have led to speculations about the case turning into an elaborate parlour game.

In the run-up to the centenary of the murders, it's high season for new books about the Ripper and, frankly, there's little to choose between them. Colin Wilson and Robin Odell's **Jack the Ripper: Summing up and Verdict**, Martin Fido's **Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper** and Martin Howells and Keith Skinner's **The Ripper Legacy** all share a suppressed excitement, a florid style, the same fascination with the puzzle; all are equally short on analysis. Contemporary suspects included a Russian doctor, a Jewish slaughterhouse worker, a vengeful abortionist, but these more modern Ripperologists favour conspiracies in high places, citing the Duke of Clarence, a Cambridge barrister, a masonic plot. Only Wilson and Odell refuse a positive ID, merely stating that he must have been a 'nobody'. Many of the 'commonsense' discourses Cameron and Frazer identify in their book are rife here, all these writers skating over the wider implications of the killings; but it's Wilson and Odell's 'You the Jury' approach which is at the same time the most thorough and the most contradictory — a hotchpotch of popular psychology, prejudice and convenient labelling. On the one hand they suggest that the murders were symbolic of a desire to kill the mother, an idea which at least acknowledges gender; on the other they state that 'Sex was surely plentiful enough for any man to obtain without murder' and that 'rape was, in a sense, *unnecessary* in 19th-century England' (my italics).

Unscathed by the challenge of feminism, the Ripperologists blithely continue their search for an individual killer, knowing that conclusive proof will never be found. Despite themselves there is, in these works of literary detection, a tacit agreement that 'Jack' could have been anyone, any man. Which is the point at which Cameron and Frazer's study begins. □

ART

Ruskin's folly

John Spurling

Women Artists: An Illustrated History
NANCY G. HELLER *Virago* £30

ONLY THE MONTH before last I suggested we could do with a book called 'Lives of the Victorian Women Artists'. Nancy G. Heller's large-format, expensively illustrated book covers the lives of Western women artists from the caves to the present day.

Of course, we have no idea whether the cave paintings were done by men or women and our knowledge of women artists in the classical and mediaeval periods is even more fragmentary than of men. A 5th-century Greek vase depicts a woman painting in the company of three men, the Elder Pliny mentions several women artists with Greek names and certain mediaeval illuminations are known to have been done by nuns rather than monks, but Dr Heller's multi-biography (125 artists) really begins with the Renaissance.

The book is not overtly polemical — it has no need to be. To set Dürer's quote at the head, as Heller does, and Ruskin's near the foot, as she unaccountably fails to do, is enough to make the moral of the story clear. What Dürer wrote in his journal in 1521 was:

> Master Gerard, the illuminator, has a daughter about eighteen years old called Susanna. She made an illumination of the Saviour, for which I paid one guilder. It is a great miracle that a mere female should do so well.

Ruskin, reviewing Elizabeth Thompson (Lady Butler)'s *Quatre Bras* in 1875, said:

> I never approached a picture with more iniquitous prejudice against it than I did Miss Thompson's; partly because I have always said that no woman could paint; and secondly, because I thought what the public made such a fuss about must be good for nothing. But it is amazon's work this . . .

Heller's straightforward and effective method of challenging this sort of prejudice is to choose one representative work by each of her subjects and give it a good-sized, usually full-page coloured illustration (Elizabeth Thompson gets a double-page spread). Magnificent Renaissance portraits by the sisters Anguissola and Lucia Fontana; powerful history paintings by Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani; glittering 17th-century still-lifes by Louise Moillon, Clara Peeters, Rachel Ruysch; intensely felt religious works by the Portuguese painter Josefa de Ayala and the Spanish sculptor Luisa Ignacia Roldán; aristocratic portraiture by Rosalba Carriera and Vigée-Lebrun and working-class portraiture by Françoise Duparc; the romantic horses of Rosa Bonheur and the Parisian urbanites of Eva Gonzalez and Berthe Morisot leap off the page and proclaim the shortsightedness of Dürer and the ignorance of Ruskin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The text is less inspiring. It must have been a nightmare to write. Heller attempts, sometimes with a note of desperation, to weld these 125 individual lives and *oeuvres* into a continuous narrative, century by century. If you picked, say, all the male artists whose names begin with G (Gaddi, Greco, Gainsborough, Goya, Gauguin, Gaudier-Brzeska . . .) and tried to do the same, you'd be in the same pickle. Art history, like the bowel, only works properly when there's enough roughage.

The book also becomes less reliable the further it advances into the 20th century. Heller is American and sees the contemporary artworld through a fish-eye, US lense: close up in the centre are a host of transatlantic worthies — some of them, like Helen Frankenthaler, genuinely worthy, others extremely iffy — while receding round the edges are a few token Europeans such as Niki de Saint-Phalle and Bridget Riley.

Women Artists is written, as the press release delicately puts it, 'on a popular level' and makes no pretensions to being very thoughtful or discriminating. The provincial American artist Georgia O'Keeffe, for instance, is described as 'the most famous woman artist of our time'. Its virtue, apart from the illustrations, is that it makes a start and suggests how much we need a more penetrating account of all these missing persons, more evidence of their work, more details of their lives. Above all, the question — only occasionally hinted at by Heller — still needs answering: how important or peripheral were these women, so often very successful in their time and so often also the daughters, wives or lovers of other, mostly obscure artists, to the twists and turns of Western art since the Renaissance? Or to turn the question round: how seriously have we misconceived those twists and turns, or actually missed others altogether, because of the absence of these artists from the reckoning? □

INVENTORY

Rooms furnish a book

Gilbert Adair

Life: A User's Manual
GEORGES PEREC trans. DAVID BELLOS
Collins/Harvill £12 & £9.95

IT WAS PERHAPS to be expected that when so vast and unclassifiable a novel as Georges Perec's *Life: A User's Manual*, by an unfamiliar and hitherto untranslated author, thumped on the desks of English critics, their primary concern should have been to *classify* it, to inscribe it within a by now well-worn mainstream of literary post-modernism.

Hence the very moot, approximate comparisons with Joyce and Calvino and even Borges (with whose terse, labyrinthine fables Perec's work has no real affinity); hence, too, the insistence on the novel's ludic, games-playing strategies, on the puns, puzzles, parodies and inauthentic 'found objects' that strew its 578 pages. And, to be fair, there exists evidence aplenty to encourage such a bias, both external (Perec's celebrated *La Disparition*, a lengthy, conventionally linear novel from which the letter *e* is conspicuous throughout by its absence; his *Alphabets*, a collection of poems of eleven lines each, evolved in strict accordance with the precepts of Schoenbergian serialism) and internal (*Life* is preceded by a learned preamble on the jigsaw puzzle, one of its author's self-confessed passions).

Yet, from Borges to Burgess, or from Barth to Barthelme, such playful, skittish cerebrality has become a bit of a postmodernist commonplace; and even if Perec was among the most brilliant of the intellectual pranksters (he died in 1982), the true originality of this amazing novel lies elsewhere. For, however it can be interpreted, *Life: A User's Manual* is not a labyrinth. It has been as legibly laid out for our attention as the magic square whose form it espouses or the house whose hundred rooms (including lavatories, landings, etc.) its narrative encompasses, even aiding us in our task with a ground plan, a name index, a chronology and an alphabetical checklist of the multifarious tales that percolate through that narrative. It is, in short, its own user's manual.

The house in question is 11, rue Simon-Crubellier, and one of its occupants, the painter Serge Valène, has conceived the idea of a fresco that would describe, in the meticulous detail of a doll's-house cross-section, every room in the building, every object in the room and every individual who, within living memory, inhabited it. The headline to my review is therefore not just a joke: each one of the rooms does furnish Valène's reveries, as he plots out his masterpiece, with a miniature, self-sufficient novel of its own (rather than *roman* Perec's subtitle for the book was *romans*, a term whose implication is slightly diminished by the translator's 'fictions' with its suggestion of short stories), many of which spiral off into luridly melodramtic chronicles of fraud, suicide and *crime passionnel*.

Here, the generative metaphor is, of course, the jigsaw puzzle, exemplified within the narrative by the life's work of the novel's most memorable character, one Percival Bartlebooth. This eccentric English millionaire (no doubt the offspring of Melville's Bartleby and Larbaud's Barnabooth) devotes ten whole years to the study of watercolour painting; a further 20 years to globetrotting with his manservant, painting various ports and harbours at the rate of one every two weeks and dispatching them to a puzzle maker so that wooden jigsaws can be made of them; and the next (and last) 20 years of his life to solving these jigsaws, which are then sent to a craftsman who detaches the original, now reconstituted watercolour from its wooden base, removes the paint and returns the re-virginalised white sheet of Waterman paper to its owner. And if that sounds like the most excruciatingly rarefied waste of time one could imagine (for Bartlebooth, Perec and the reader), it might be worth pointing out that it offers a quite eerie analogy with writing, printing, publishing, reading, discarding and eventually forgetting a book.

Yet, if his novel is more than just a highbrow board game, an intellectual's Cluedo, it's precisely because, instead of chess or Go, Perec chose for a model the humble, almost disreputable jigsaw puzzle. For he was also, and perhaps especially, admired in France as a celebrant of the quotidian, of the humdrum minutiae of contemporary urban existence which most novelists exclude from their vision but which he alchemically sensitised in such works as his anthology of random memories, *Je me souviens*, and his slight but utterly unique *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien*, a pokerfaced account of the nine days he spent sitting at a café terrace in Paris's place Saint-Sulpice recording exactly what happened before his eyes: the direction taken by a flock of pigeons, say, or the frequency of number 87 buses as against number 63.

Life: A User's Manual is a mammoth *catalogue raisonnée* of the world's population of *things* — things known and unknown, banal and bizarre, significant and trivial. And what makes it ultimately so moving and lovable is that, though it fails (as it was intended to fail) as a user's manual to life, prompting one in the end, as with most such manuals, to cast it aside and improvise for oneself, though Valène fails to complete his painting and even Bartlebooth finds himself confronted, in the very last sentence of the book, with the puzzler's worst nightmare, this world of things remains, secure and serene in its unquenchable thereness.

Three cheers, finally, for David Bellos' heroic translation. If, not surprisingly, an occasional pun appears smudged in its English version, he actually contrives to have a few additional tricks up his own sleeve (that pair of unbroken diagonal lines of gs, for instance, traversing pages 230 and 231, as though in fitting homage to Georges Perec). □

FICTION

The haunting

Barbara Burford

Beloved
TONI MORRISON *Chatto* £11.95

TONI MORRISON's latest novel is hard. Often, to ease the pain, it was necessary to put it down, to look around at anything at all and to try and convince myself that those days are gone. But, always, I was drawn back — not only because Morrison writes with such limpid, deceptive ease, but because I cared so much about the characters living through her skill.

Sweeping backwards and forwards in time the novel takes as its pivot the turmoil and upheavals during the struggle for the abolition of slavery in the USA. Its central character is Sethe, a slave on Sweet Home, the plantation of the 'liberal' Gearings. She grows up a house slave, grateful never to have been mistreated physically, is allowed to 'marry' the slave of her choice and to keep and rear their children as her duties permit.

All this changes when Mr Gearing comes home slumped over his horse, officially dying from a stroke but with something suspiciously like a bullet hole in his eardrum. He had perhaps been too fond of boasting to his neighbours that he allowed 'his niggers' to be men. Schoolteacher, a distant relative, arrives to take over with his two sons, and the Sweet Home slaves begin to learn the harsher realities of life as slaves. Sethe, six months pregnant, sends her three children — the youngest,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Beloved, still unweaned — ahead of her with a band of slaves escaping to the 'free North', then goes back to try and find Halle, her husband. In one of the book's most painful episodes, Sethe is caught and brutalised by Schoolteacher's sons, while he looks on. Even so, she escapes and, after enduring privations that had me weeping with pain and rage, finally gains the sanctuary of 124 Bluestone Road, where she is reunited with her children.

For anyone who has lived with Sethe through the preceding events, it is only too easy to empathise with her when, on seeing Schoolteacher and a party of white men riding towards the house, she gathers her children into the woodshed — and tries to kill them.

> If they didn't get it right off — she could never explain. Because the truth was simple, not a longdrawn-out record of flowered shifts, tree cages, selfishness, ankle ropes and wells. Simple: she was squatting in the garden and when she saw them coming and recognised Schoolteacher's hat, she heard wings. Little hummingbirds stuck their needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything, it was No. No. Nono. Nonono. Simple. She just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out, away, over there where no one could hurt them.

She succeeds only with Beloved. The two boys are ever afterwards afraid of their mother, going everywhere together, holding hands tightly even in their sleep; and Denver, the other girl child who was only a baby when the events happened, develops a very real fear that Sethe will kill her too.

The Beloved of the title is a two-edged sword. At first she haunts 124 Bluestone Road as a sort of poltergeist, later as a young girl, with no memory or past, found sitting outside the house. This 'haint' and the growing obsessive relationship between her and Sethe are the spine of the book, to which all else attaches.

Toni Morrison's skill with characterisation is effortless; not even the minor players are easy to forget. There are also passages of such sheer, singing, lyrical beauty — Paul D following the spring blossoms north to freedom; the bluefern spores drifting along the banks of the Ohio River — that the mind's eye is seduced by the beauty, only to be stunned by yet another depiction of the inhumanity of the times.

This is a book to be read by all: by those 'liberals' secretly offput by the 'impatience and intemperance' of Black people's demands: and by Black people who will find the 'rememorying' painful and not at all cathartic. This is not a book to be forgotten, try though we might, because Toni Morrison has given our ancient nightmares flesh and has made us feel and care for the souls inhabiting those long-ago bodies. A very special book indeed, from a brave and fearless writer. □

Why are we so cagey

Mark Haworth-Booth

Why are we so cagey with new neighbours?
(Things are always different with babies).
The 30-ish couple just settled in
a few doors away at eleven
certainly use their share of car space.
These two-car families should pay more rates.
He drives a BMW, she runs about
in a boutique jeep called a Shogun Colt.
Pretty extravagant that three piece suite.
Not really Peter Jones more G.T.C. —
and into 5 week skiing trips apparently.
Someone said it's music business money.

Today I clip away at the privet
so I can contemplate my privacy —
I wonder if my dad was this lonely? —
and study, of course, my new neighbours'
house. Coordinates of English social class . . .
now she's decorating, up the ladder,
a coat of gloss on her front bay window.
I glimpse a deep tanned marvellous midriff.
She bites hello with strong and friendly teeth.

FICTION

Tangled testicles

Richard Deveson

Are You Listening Rabbi Löw
J.P. DONLEAVY *Viking* £11.95

WE THINK we've cracked it.

We really do.

They said it was impossible. 'Build a machine that writes books? You've got to be kidding.' Thus spake the carping critics, the rulers of the 'literary' roost for the past few millenia. But the kidology has gone into rapid rewind now they've seen the new JPD9.

We'd be happy to admit that the first-generation JPD (affectionately known in the trade as *Ginger Man*) still showed tell-tale traces of human input in its construction. Back in those steam-driven days, you used to have to employ what was quaintly called — remember? — an 'author'. A glum little gremlin who crunched out the word-sequences under manual control. A core functional unit that all too often malfunctioned. But, as JPD2, JPD3 and later models came on stream, we steadily ironed out this crucial, once hiccup-strewn area. So that today, when you admire the sleek, sexy lines of the JPD9, when you marvel at its weightless, frictionless read, you can rest secure in the knowledge that no human hand has touched it from start to FINIS.

Worried about punctuation? No problem with JPD6 just leave it out or. Put it in when you feel like it. Bothered by lack of lexical thrust? You'll be astonished at the potency of the JPD9's 250-word dictionary. Especially when expanded by its mind-blowing Morphological Generator. So you don't just get *fuck*, you get *fuck-s, fuck-ed, fuck-ing* and *fuck-er*. Five *fucks* for the price of one. And you still get a breath-taking range of Idiomatic Variation on your basic *fuck*, as in *—off, Holy —* and *What the —*.

But perhaps our particular proprietorial pride (all JPDs, of course, come complete with wacky alliteration) is our solution to the old 'literary' problem of the three Ps: People, Places and Plot. In the bad old days, your Glum Gremlin would get seriously blocked on the three Ps, trying to 'describe' them, 'evoke' them or — horrors — 'invent' them. Not any more. *People*. The builders of Balthazar B and Darcy Dancer are pleased to present: Sigmund Schultz. (Cap that, Criticus Carpicus.) Sigmund S's inner life describes like a dream: all he thinks about is his erections and his cash flow. *Places*. You choose the glittering locale of your fantasies — West End mansion, Scottish castle, Riviera yacht — and JPD9 will evoke it quicker than you can quip 'Cliché'. *Plot*. Simpler still. We've eliminated it altogether. For freebies, we've thrown in a few jolly japes for the kids, of course. Naughty nurses and nutty nymphomaniacs. Testicles getting tangled in trousers. The most incredible fucking tits and ass you saw in your fucking life. Until the next fucking lot. All served (oops, serviced) with a cat-o'-nine-tails. To say nothing of the dog.

And, as ever, there's a fourth P: the inimitable, irresistible JPD Poem that ends each chapter. JPD9's Poems are so perfect we're impelled to break into celebratory verse ourselves.

All the perfect machine
Needs is a
Machine to read
It □

Public service labour relations: Recent trends and future prospects, *by T. Treu et al.*

This study explores the characteristics of labour relations in public service employment in France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S. It analyses the developments that have taken place in trade unionism, methods for determining conditions of employment, labour disputes and their settlement, and strikes in the public service, as well as highlighting issues that are liable to be on the labour relations agenda for some time.
ISBN 92-2-106049-7 £14.30

Working hours: Assessing the potential for reduction, *by M. White*

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, economists have repeatedly predicted that reduction in working hours would damage business. Advocates of shorter hours have repeatedly held out the promise of a cure for unemployment. Both groups have usually been wrong, as the flexibility of workers and the resourcefulness of management have not been sufficiently reckoned with. This book is an informative account of this debate and suggests how possibilities for shorter working time can be made more realistic.
ISBN 92-2-106-151-5 £8.80

Access and Visa cards accepted

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
Branch Office
96/98 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4LY.
Tel: 01-828 6401

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lubbock v Wright (cont.)

Jules Lubbock, St Pancras North, London
Patrick Wright accuses me of naivety in refusing to face up to the reality that 'there can be no straightforward appeal' to heritage because it has been tainted by ideologues like Evelyn Waugh who used it to define the 'traditional nation' imperilled by the Welfare State (Letters 30 October).

Mrs Thatcher likes whisky; must I therefore take to gin? If the right knew this, they could literally starve the left into submission. This is the inhibiting effect of Patrick Wright's ambivalence about heritage, of which I accused him. I praised Coin Street as a model for a socialist environment policy precisely because it is responsive both to London's heritage and to the social needs of local people in a thoroughly straightforward way which shows that there is no need to tie ourselves in knots searching for 'a proper left analysis'. The skyline of St Paul's is one of the overwhelming feats of human imagination. It is our heritage; the City has wrecked it, Coin Street has helped restore it. To break the monopoly of the right on environmental issues what is needed is a fulsome commitment to such achievements rather than dithering. I stand by that position.

Hooray Henry Hurricane

John Marriott, Folkestone, Kent
'Decayed town centre, ageing population, high unemployment' — where? No, not Halifax, but Folkestone, this Edwardian pearl of the south-east coast, which took the full force of your 'Hooray Henry Hurricane' (*NS* 23 October). Even the weather, it seems, must now be included in facile North/South generalisations.

I was at Chesterfield too

Mike Burgess, London E2
There were the arguments about whether the Soviet Union is socialist. The arguments about whether certain black politicians were principled. The calls for unity. The solidarity among delegates who voiced their hatred of the SWP.

There was the woman who attended a racism workshop to urge us to speak Esperanto; the Kurdish speaker who had, with refreshing honesty, come '. . . to blame you and to appeal to you . . .' A speaker from Greenham referred to the blood on Namibian uranium. Coffee and gateaux were served by catering skivvies who called comrades 'Sir' without any illusions about what side of their bread their liberation was buttered on.

Almost alone, in this ideological equivalent of the Boat Show, was the success story of the Non-Stop Picket, referred to, in passing, by Sharon Atkin and Jeremy Corbyn as if it were a freak of nature. Speeches from Norma Kitson and Carol Brickley served to show that the success story was due to the hard work of principled activists operating on the streets in a non-sectarian manner to form a truly democratic movement.

Ironically, Tony Benn summed up by suggesting that the conference was so successful that, in years to come, the conference badges would fetch a fortune in Sotheby's. In other words this was such a landmark in socialist organisation against capitalism that its artifacts would become valuable in the institutions of an undamaged capitalist economy.

Living on the front line

Gillian D. Ursell, Bradford
As someone living on the front line of Thatcher's revolution, I feel the need to speak. Each day at work — just like all my colleagues — I face too many students, too few books, not enough classroom space and worsening prospects. I return home to find my home bombarded with bottles, eggs, motor oil, matches. My car, left in the street, has nails in its tyres and its paintwork gouged. The police sympathetically joke, 'Are you a policeman's wife? This happens to them all the time.' No, I'm not a policeman's wife. I'm a middle-aged, middle-class woman who tries to teach students the skills and virtues of rational thinking. But the attacks on my property have been going on for six years now — about as long as the attacks on my profession. This coincidence is not fortuitous. It has everything to do with what Zygmunt Bauman was writing about (*NS* 23 October): the changing faces of power and its exercise.

I see what Bauman is getting at, and I go along with much of it. But I want to extend the argument beyond artistic culture to culture generally, and I also want to indicate two disagreements with Bauman. One is his choice of the verb 'to fall'. The cultural sphere hasn't fallen into the embrace of the consumer market, it has been pushed. Cultural workers in education (just like public service broadcasters) are being evicted by this government from their production base in publicly funded cultural institutions. But that production base has also been the signifier of their authority within the cultural sphere. Degrade the terms of their entry to the base, and you degrade both their cultural authority and their 'product'. The government's White Paper on Higher Education and its sordid pretence of a pay offer to HE staff are twin arms of a pincer movement designed to emasculate the cultural status of critical, reflexive thought and those who seek to encourage it. This erosion simultaneously requires and promotes anti-intellectualism, anti-liberalism, anti-rationalism . . . sentiments which are especially appealing to those against whom the scales of social advantage are already weighed most heavily. So it is that the government and the underclass of Britain alike identify me and my kind as 'the enemy', evicting us from our position in the sphere of cultural production, and driving me out (because I can no longer jeopardise my child) from my home.

But what is happening here is much more than a Thatcherite drive towards populist totalitarianism. No, Thatcherism is just the local brand of a sea-change affecting all the industrialised world, a sea-change which amounts to the revocation of rationality itself . . . the undoing of the Enlightenment, the enthroning of Desire as the determinant of human affairs. Or rather, some human affairs. For this is where my second disagreement with Bauman comes in. Desire is encouraged as the determinant of human affairs only where these are confined to consumption. By comparison, in production rationality continues to rule OK, encapsulated in machine and microchip logic and ruthlessly driving labour power to its weakest bargaining condition and its lowest commodity price. Those of us who must labour cannot escape this rationality; our material existence is constrained by it. Contrast that with the ultimate consumer, the one for whom production (distanced and invisible, of course) provides everything. Ultimate consumers escape the constraints of materiality: for them, 'reality' becomes ever more fashioned by human will and imagination rather than matter . . . witness the 'hyper-realities' of the shopping malls.

In the epoch of consumption-driven politics, the ontological assertions of Idealist philosophies rise in status alongside the empirical sciences' recognition of material limits. But simultaneously the ideological battle — for which the cultural sphere is so crucial — becomes more, not less significant. The release of desire for consumption purposes is, at this historical moment, enjoined with its repression for the purposes of production. That constitutes a contradiction with which the majority of us must daily grapple. And the appeals of consumer freedom are meaningful only for those whose purses gain them admittance to the shopping malls. For those disenfranchised from the malls (typically, because they are disenfranchised from production), made daily aware of their deprivation by the media's insistent trumpeting of a consumers' paradise, there is impotence, envy, rage and repression. Moreover, the standard instrument of repression, that is, the police, is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

legitimised by appeal to the essential rationality of the law. How long can such an instrument continue to function effectively if its basis for authority is downgraded by government's own rhetoric and actions?

Far from the consumer society being here and settled, far from culture being market-driven and harmless, the contradictions guarantee the persistence of political struggles. Their sites, and their terms of articulation, change, of course. But the only feasible end to struggles over resources made or naturally scarce is abundance for all, and we're a long way from that yet.

The 'new' unilateralism

Martin Roberts, Glasgow

Ben Pimlott asserts (*NS* 25 October) that elections have been lost because of unilateralism. This is the line favoured by the press and by the Tory party, yet not even Denis Healey believes it, and he more than most people might have a reason to, since if it was he might have been Foreign Secretary since 1983. Arguably the most crucial election in recent years was in 1979. That was when the tide against socialism turned and in that election defence was not a major issue; indeed Labour were led by a Prime Minister who believed in Trident. All the present government has to do is to remind the voters of the winter of discontent and the procession 'cap in hand' to the IMF.

The crucial issues are those affecting the economy. So long as the majority feel that the Tories are likely to hurt their pockets less than Labour they will continue to vote Tory. If Labour can change people's perception of the economy then the wording of its defence policy will fall into place. To concentrate on the latter while assuming that everyone at heart would like to see a Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer is to put the tank inside the tiger.

John Hughes & Stella McGuire, Doncaster

We agree with Ben Pimlott that Joan Ruddock's argument that Britain should abandon Trident while 'demanding' reciprocal Soviet action is flawed. It's the wrong choice of word in the context of independent action by Britain. If she said 'urge' instead it would still make sense.

The flaw lies in the underlying assumption that nuclear weapons are something of value to Britain which have to be traded off with the Soviet Union. This is not the case. Nuclear weapons are a burden and a threat to Britain and by independently ridding ourselves of them we will be doing ourselves the greatest favour. To ascribe value to British nuclear weapons completely misses the point. Anything the Soviet Union would give up would be a bonus, not a necessary payment for some 'loss'.

Boer truth

J. de Goede, Minister, South African Embassy

David Tereshchuk's article (*NS* 30 October) has an interesting conspiratorial tone; the truth is a good deal more mundane. Colonel Crowther's transfer back to Pretoria was initiated after a normal three-year term of duty in the United Kingdom. The note from this Embassy informing the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of his transfer was dated 3 July 1987 and could not possibly have had any connection with the alleged conspiracy. I fail to see why any serious 'sources' would have given a version of circumstances surrounding Colonel Crowther's transfer which differed in any detail from the correct one.

In defence of abortion

Stephen Shellard, Dumfries

Alison Davis's powerful anti-abortion letter deserves a reply (Letters 30 October). She reasonably asks why the killing of a foetus should be distinguished in moral terms from, say, the killing of an old person. In posing this question she equates the humanity of a foetus with that of a person who has actually entered into the world. This equation breaks down in the light of contemporary understanding of what distinguishes humanity from other living organisms — i.e. its social character, so the death of a foetus is not a tragedy on the same scale, in my view, as the death of a person.

It is in *defence* of human life that abortion should be an option available for women to use without censor. But if society supported single parents adequately this option would be taken up with diminishing frequency.

Salamanca 6 November

Many copies of last week's issue were marred by a printing fault on p37 which made the clues to 'CONES' (4 letters) unreadable. We will print them again in full with next week's crossword. Apologies.

CLASSIFIED ADS: 01-739 1645

New Statesman
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ

DISPLAY RATES: *£11 per s.c.c.* + VAT (min 3cm)
Charities/Agenda £9.50 per s.c.c. + VAT min 3cm

LINAGE: All categories *45p* per word + VAT, (min 20 words)

HEARTSEARCH/ PURSUITS/ AGENDA *45p* per word + VAT min 20 words
Box No. charge £2.50
Send ads to: **Classified Dept, New Statesman, FREEPOST, London E2 8BR**

DEADLINE: Normally *12 noon Mon.* for *Fri.*

BOOKINGS, ENQUIRIES: Call *Colette O'Reilly 01-739 1645*

HEARTSEARCH

AFFECTIONATE, AMUSING, professional man (50) in semi-detached marriage seeks uncomplicated romantic relationship with independent literate woman, perhaps similarly placed, to share interests ranging from hill-walking and politics to theatre and opera via wining, dining and dallying. Sussex/London. Box no. 46/0532. W46 3

AFFINITIES, INTELLIGENT, single, professional, socially adept, but just not meeting the right person. Affinities dating can help. Tel: 01 226 3337. Free brochure. W46 6

ATTRACTIVE, GENTLE, semi-retired professional woman with wide cultural, social and nature interests seeks male friend/companion, sixtyish, for a mutually nurturing and sustaining relationship. Box no. 46/0521. W46

ATTRACTIVE MAN (50's), interested in the Arts (amongst many other things) London-based, seeks a **WARM-NATURED WOMAN**, slim to medium for enjoyable friendship. Box no. 45/0502. W45 8

BEANBAG SOCIALIST. Gentle Newcastle-upon-Tyne male (26) excited by new games, growth, cycling, dance, modern music and new political ideas is searching for female (23-45?) to share values, hopes and fears. Box no. 46/0523. W46 5

BERKSHIRE, 50+, divorced woman, attractive, interesting, seeks warm friendship with male interested in the arts and countryside. Box no. 46/0534. W46 9

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011. W46 20

EASY GOING physicist, male, 30, Cambridge based, oriental origin, seeks warm, sincere woman who enjoys life for companionship and more. Box no. 45/0505. W45 5

EVAN FOR URBAN CYNICS, dreams come true! **FLORA HANDLEY INTRODUCTIONS,** the dating service for individuals. The Bookshop, 30 Lambs Conduit Street, WC1. Tel: 509 2690. W46 10

FEMALE DOCTOR, London, good looking, elegant, unattached, financially independent, jewish non-orthodox, seeks educated, reliable enterprising tallish man, 35-42, with sense of humour for stimulating interesting permanent friendship. Box no. 46/0542. W46 10A

IF YOU are a man who enjoys life as you do your music — without always clutching at scores, this lively, London based antipodean lady would like to meet you. Box no. 46/0535. W46 11

LITERARY-MINDED female, (35) Bristol-based, independent, sociable, seeks similar male, 35-45, for articulate, caring times in warm, mutual relationship: friendship or futher. Box no. 46/0519. W46 12

LIVELY, WARM, intelligent woman, fortyish, fulfilling job, now seeks compatible male. East Anglia/London for leisure pursuits. Enjoys conversation, travel, music, reading. Apply box no. 46/0531. W46 13

MALE, 27, East Midlands based, seeks wide-ranging female, interested in cinema, arts, argument and possibly cycling, for dialogue/companionship. Box no. 46/0541. W46 14

MALE, 50, easygoing, no ties, tall, slim, secure, own house Sussex coast offers slim sensuous woman friendship/marriage. Box no. 46/0520. W46 15

MALE 37, separated, 5'6", madly analytical, loves banging head against brick walls, seeks soul mate for stimulating conversation and whatever develops. West Midlands. Box no. 46/0518. W46 16

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. 01-226 5432. W45 31

ORDINARY WOMAN, 47, would like to meet similar man for initial friendship and occassional simple ventures as walking, conversation, cinema and television! London. Box no. 46/0533. W46 17

SOLO MALE TEACHER, 46, greenish, socialist wishes to share love, laughter, rambles, music, conversation, pubs with similar lady. Merseyside, North preferred. Box no. 46/0539. W46 18

SPIRITUAL PROFESSIONAL LADY, tall, 32, Radio 4, Guardian, family life, sightseeing/travel, classical music, politics. Practical, kind creative daughter of Oxbridge educated W/African diplomat. Separated, son age 7, temporarily lost, seeks revivial of senses with artist/designer psychologist, non-smoking, good looking, kind, loving gentleman. Midlands, will relocate. Photo, phone appreciated. Box no. 46/0524. W46 19

VERY FEMININE ATTRACTIVE lady (45). Loves wild flowers, countryside, cultural pursuits, socialising, books, gardening, homelife, seeks gentleman for lasting relationship. Box no. 46/0525. W46 20

ACCOMODATION VACANT

MATURE FEMALE overseas graduate urgently needs London accommodation until March in exchange for part time domestic help. Tel: 01 444 9786. W46 21

PROPERTY

PARADISE IN NW1; 5-storey period house, a short walk from City and West End. New kitchen and bathrooms, 5 big light rooms, roof sun-terrace. New plumbing, electrical, heating and security systems. Beautiful, long, secluded, mature, SW garden. Freehold £280,000. Tel. 01 402 2231. W44 8

LEGAL SERVICES

A.J. & D.E. FOLKES
CONVEYANCING
SALE/PURCHASE RESIDENTIAL FREEHOLD £150
VAT and disbursements chargeable. Written quotations.
Personal attendance not necessary.
61 Greenford Avenue, London W7 1LL.
Telephone 01-840 3333
SOLICITORS ESTABLISHED 1918

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL COLETTE O'REILLY 01-739 1645

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

MON 16 NOV

SETTING THE GREEN AGENDA. JONATHON PORRITT. Director, Friends of the Earth, "The Anti-Bodies: the state of the Green Movement in Britain today". St James's Church, Piccadilly 01-734 4511 at 1.05pm.

TUES 17 NOV

PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Talk by Roderick Graham on "The Balance Between Male and Female". Charge 75p (including refreshments). UB40 cards free. The Progressive League caters for mind, body and intellectual stimulus. Ring 01-435 3640 for information.

FURNISHING THE WORLD

Pat Kirdham, Rodney Mace, Julia Porter

Examines the social history of furniture production. Uses archive material and interviews with the trades workers.

Journeyman

160pp/108 illus/£10.95

WED 18 NOV

ROBIN COOK MP on "The Future of the NHS". 7.30pm, House of Commons Committee Room 19. All welcome. Central London Fabian Society.

FORTHCOMING

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. The Hilda Hulme Memorial Lecture in English Literature entitled: 'Shakespeare and Revision" will be given by Dr Stanley Wells (General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare, Senior Research Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford and Director-elect of the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham) at 5.30pm on Thursday, 3 December 1987 in the Beveridge Hall at the University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. ADMISSION FREE, WITHOUT TICKET.

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY explains reincarnation, karma, God, man and nature. Talks, informal meetings. Sun. 8pm. SAE for free literature, book list. ULT, 62 Queens Gdns. London W2. W43.6

Heartsearch & Pursuits £11.50

for minimum of 20wds incl. Box No & VAT (extra words at 45p)

Please complete the coupon below and send with remittance or credit card no.

AD TEXT (BLOCK CAPS) or use separate sheet of paper

Name: _____

Address _____

No. of weeks: _____ Remittance £ _____

Or charge my Access/Visa/American Express

Card number: _____

AD for PURSUITS ☐/HEARTSEARCH ☐ **(please tick)**

Post Coupon to: **Classified Dept., New Statesman, FREEPOST, London E2 8BR**

HOLIDAYS/TRAVEL

TRIED THE REST, now try the best. For low air fares to world-wide destinations inc. Africa. SHL. 313A Hoe St, London E17. 01-520 7911. N50.16

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA. Low cost flights, holiday journeys, 3-6 weeks. JLA, 16 Devonshire Road, London W4 2HD. 01-747 3108. N49.30

SOUTHERN SPAIN SELF-CONTAINED APARTMENT in old olive mill, beautiful, unspoilt setting, 12 miles from coast. Tel: 09276 6775. W45.1

NAPLES. 20 Dec.-30 Dec. **£185**

FLORENCE. 20 Dec.-30 Dec. **£185**

PRAGUE. 24 Dec.-3 Jan. **£185**

(For 70th anniversary)

YORKSHIRE TOURS

49 Thornton Lodge Road, Huddersfield HD1 3JQ

Phone 0484 24269

OUT OF APATHY:
30 YEARS OF THE NEW LEFT

A one-day conference on the British New Left and its meaning for left politics today - organised by the Oxford University Socialist Discussion Group

Speakers include:

Michael Barratt-Brown, April Carter, Stuart Hall, John Hughes, Rod Prince, Raphael Samuel, Charles Taylor, Arnold Wesker, Raymond Williams, Peter Worsley.

Sessions on:

Cultural politics, class, new left economic policy, CND and non-alignment, socialist humanism, artists and the new left.

Saturday 14th November,
10.00 - 6.00pm (Registration at 9.00am),
St Cross Building, St Cross Road, Oxford

Tickets: £5 (waged), £2 (students and unwaged)
For tickets and further information write to
Seth Moglen,
Holywell Manor, Manor Road, Oxford OX1
or ring 0865-244906
(make cheques payable to
OU Socialist Discussion Group)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BILLBOARD

Enquiries: Laura Berryman 01-739 1645

Theatre

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) **SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS, ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.** Lyttleton (proscenium stage) **WAITING FOR GODOT, FATHERS & SONS.** Cottesloe (small stage) **ENTERTAINING STRANGERS, DOWN CEMETRY ROAD.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 0629 Sun 15 Nov at 7.30pm **ELECTRONIC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.** Tickets £5.00 (concs £3.00).

PERSONAL

HAS ANYONE else got a daughter isolated by learning difficulties. We have a sixteen year old, live in Putney, would love to meet parents of daughter with similar problems. Box no. 46/0529 W46.2

FINANCIAL

SALARIED PERSONS Postal Loans Ltd. Loans from £50. 175 Regent Street, London W1. For written quote apply: Tel: 01-734 1974. N49.39

PUBLICATIONS

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermillion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822. N49.24

THE NEW SOVIET REVOLUTION. Mikhail Gorbachev last week made an historic speech on the history, and future of the Soviet Union. You can read the full text in this week's "7 Days", the British Communist Party's weekly paper. This week's issue also contains an in depth look at Aids, the crisis in the City and this weekend's C.P.'s congress. For a free copy of this week's 7 Days, a subscription (£20, 12 months; £10, 6 months) or further details write or phone "7 Days", Freepost, 16 St John Street, London EC1 1BL (01 251 4170) W46.3

FABIAN SOCIETY

"The Politics of Prosperity" by **Charles Leadbeater.** "An eloquent advocate of ideas which are becoming familiar in the Labour intellectual archipelago around Mr Kinnock." The Guardian. Send cheque/PO for £1.50 to Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN.

COMPACT DISCS

LENIN READS HIS SPEECHES — ON COMPACT DISC. Recordings from 1919-21. Available from Collett's or direct from the manufactuer. Please send a cheque or money order for £6.99 to Olympia Compact Discs Ltd, Southwater West Sussex, RH13 7YT. W46.4

LECTURE

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. The 1987 Stamp Memorial Lecture entitled: "Value for Money in Taxation" will be given by Sir Lawrence Airey, KCB (Chairman of the Inland Revenue) 1980-86 and previously Second Permanent Secretary to the Treasury) at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 26 November 1987 in the Beveridge Hall at the University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. ADMISSION FREE, WITHOUT TICKET W46.1

COUNSELLING

CRISIS HELP

See *New Statesman* for week ending 6 November.

Phone **01-372 5101.**

EDUCATION

AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL?

St Christopher School has never lost sight of the central importance of the individual. Since 1915 we have aimed to show care and to encourage creativity in a combination that gives young people both immediate confidence and scope for lifelong fulfilment.

Our campus has the atmosphere of an informal village with homely boarding houses for younger pupils and student-style accommodation in the sixth form. The diet is vegetarian. Children – and parents – of independent spirit respond well to the warm purposeful ethos and to the opportunities for self-government.

There is much to challenge both mind and spirit, with 16 courses taken to 'A' Level, superb facilities for drama, music and art, a strong emphasis on modern technology and adventure training for all.

Boarders admitted at age 8-13 and directly into the Sixth Form.

Write or phone the Admissions Secretary, Bernie Osborne **(0462) 679301** for prospectus.

ST CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL, LETCHWORTH, HERTS SG6 3JZ

APPOINTMENTS

TRADE UNION RESEARCH

The Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians invites applications for the post of **Assistant Research Officer.**

The postholder will be expected to contribute to the work of a busy Research and Organisation Department as required. He or she will have a good degree in a relevant subject and an ability to produce written information quickly and concisely.

The salary will be paid at an annual rate of **£11,854.79** inclusive of allowances.

Written applications together with a full CV and names and addresses of two referees should be addressed to

The General Secretary,
UCATT.
UCATT House,
177, Abbeville Road,
London, SW4 9RL

to arrive no later than **Friday 4 December 1987**

UCATT is an equal Opportunities Employer

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345. N49.34

Please mention **NEW STATESMAN** when replying to advertisements

Union of Communication Workers

ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER

The UCW requires an Assistant Research Officer who will have responsibility for briefing on general policy and pay bargaining.
The Union has 193,000 members in the Post Office and British Telecom and is affiliated to the Labour Party. Applicants should have a degree, an ability to conduct research tasks under pressure, a knowledge of the trade union movement and a sympathy with its objectives. Although not essential, a knowledge of economics, accountancy or computing could be advantageous.

Salary is £15,960 × £16,564 (including London Weighting). The post is pensionable. Five weeks annual leave rising to six weeks after 5 years.

For consideration please give full personal and academic details which should include any trade union experience and political/public service activity.

Apply in writing to **Chief Clerk, UCW House, Crescent Lane, London SW4 9RN, by Tuesday 24 November.**

NEW STATESMAN

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT

Joan is moving on to pastures new and Cecilia needs an experienced subscription clerk to assist her in the running of a busy department. The ability to work with the minimum of supervision and to operate a computer together with a good telephone manner are essential.

Age 20-30
Non-smoker preferred
Salary £9,000. Please ring Cecilia Milton on 01-739 1737.

astms

DIVISIONAL OFFICER VACANCY BISHOP'S STORTFORD

Due to a promotion, we have a vacancy for a Divisional Officer in Bishops Stortford. **The post will involve representation and negotiations on behalf of ASTMS members. Commencing salary will be £15,238.98 p.a. rising by £150 p.a. for three years to £15,688.96 p.a.** The position will be subject to a probationary period and all applicants must have at least two years membership of a bona fide trade union.

ASTMS is an equal opportunities employer.

Application forms are available from the **General Secretary, Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, 79 Camden Road, London NW1 9ES** and the closing date for receipt of completed applications is **Friday 11 December 1987.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Blushing parents

Andrew Lumsden

I FIND MYSELF writing on a postcard to Michael Leapman, under his job-share hat on the weekly media page of the *Independent*, that 'in my judgment this could be the most important event in lesbian/gay periodical publishing since the first issue of *Gay News* in 1972. . . .'

Oh? And what could? A 20,000 initial print-run news-and-comment weekly called *The Pink Paper*, out this week, co-edited by Stephen Burn, 24, formerly with and for a while editor of *Capital Gay*, and Jan Parker, 30, ex-*Spare Rib*, ex-GLC women's committee support unit and lesbian and gay officer with the Association of London Authorities since February, which she's continuing on a job-share basis.

You see it? Of course you do: for all the excellences of *Gay Times* (monthly, national), *Capital Gay* (weekly, London area), the regionals *Gay Scotland*, *Gay Life* of Manchester, *European Gay Review* and the exceptionally gender-balanced *Square Peg*, there has never yet in the UK in all the 17 years since a couple of LSE students launched the British variant of Gay Liberation Front in October 1970 been a successful *frequent* news periodical for/by both the sexes of homosexuals.

Divide and rule, homophobia might as well be saying.

Gay News (1972-83) came nearest to it both by intent and through the superlative literary pages edited by Alison Hennegan ('Do, do say to Alison how much I'd like her to write for me, next time you see her,' said 'Bron' Waugh to me this 27 October under *his* hat as editor of *Literary Review*, in the intervals of trying to sell me subscriptions and stray cases of wine he just happened to have about his person. It was at the launch party for *Small Talk* by my friend Andrew Barrow — I may as well get all my log-rolling done with in one go — and such was the pace of introductions to those who pass for our age's celebrities that I grew hopelessly confused and thought that from having just met Auberon, Duchess of Argyll, I was being handed on to know Margaret, Editor of *Literary Review*. I don't know how straights keep up with the complexities of it all, I complained, as people straightened me out).

Anyway, *Gay News*, a fortnightly, came nearest to being a national news-journal genuinely for both sexes, but its editors were men and the news-teams over 12 years — principal figure among them the prodigious Michael Mason, now co-owner of *Capital Gay*, who has been retailing the gay news since roughly the time today's school-leavers were conceived — were almost invariably all-male.

There was an exception when the author Gill Hanscombe was with *Gay News*, and I believe there was briefly one other lesbian reporter. I for one no more think that gay men, however well-intentioned, can inspire full confidence in the lesbian reader and ensure unaided the perspectives open to a woman than I think that even the most liberal of straight-dominated presses can inspire confidence in their (ten per cent of?) homosexual readers — unless, as I've murmured here before, like the *San Francisco Chronicle* for the past decade, they actually payroll 'out' gay journalists.

I for one? 100 per cent of lesbians agree. What percentage of gay men does? That's the question on which this brave launch, in the very week the General Synod holds its ludicrous discussion about the moral capacities of homosexual people, depends. The bet *The Pink Paper* is laying is that as we near (1990) the fourth calendar decade of modern *'come on out'* homosexual sensibility in the West (and Leningrad and Asia and . . . everywhere) misogynistic separatism among the men is crumbling, if only as HIV makes *such* adults of us all.

The Pink Paper will be available in London and 15 other major centres including Scotland and Wales and, in the modern style, free. The ad manager is my old friend Lisa Power, for eight years a stalwart of the London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard.

Trading profits, when they arise, will be handed to Switchboard and other sectors of the movement. Good luck. □

FIRST PERSON

Maggie's Sheffield

Jean Daniels

OUR HOUSE is a turn-of-the-century, medium sized terrace. Because when we bought it it had been, if not neglected, merely lived in for years, it needs a fair amount of work to make it just okay.

It stands between two rented houses. Any discerning property buyer would have rejected it because of this, as they are badly run-down places, only repaired shoddily, at minimal cost, when the need arises. They keep the landlords (who live on the other side of town) in about £60 a week from the state.

Anyway, as we weren't experienced or particularly discerning, we bought the house — desperate, with a three-month-old baby, to get out of a one-bedroom flat to somewhere cheap and reasonable enough to live in. As first-time buyers we thought it was a dream and, comparatively, I suppose it is. Besides, we're fortunate enough to have a car — even though it's got more miles on the clock than the equatorial circumference has inches — and a phone, because, well, it was here when we moved in.

Money, however, is tight. The loss of one income and the addition of a baby and a mortgage almost simultaneously would cause headaches for the most creative of accountants. Our 'breadwinner' earns £570 a month after tax, which puts us in the 'under the average but over the safety net' income bracket. Still, at least we can't complain of belonging to the fashionably-termed 'underclass' — or 'dole-ies', as they're insensitively called around here. So I watched the summer's Election campaign obsessively, channel-hopping for three weeks to become conversant with the issues facing the nation and — more importantly — me. Then, educated to bursting point, I made up my mind and went to vote (yes, the same way I would have done if I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hadn't listened to all the chat), hoping for some decent childcare facilities, reinstatement of home improvement grants, sanctions against South Africa and to sleep at night without worrying that a stray nuclear weapon might land on my newly acquired lawn. Mostly, though, I wanted some jobs — and preferably one for me.

It was not to be. I found myself becoming irrationally angry with *Newsnight* et al for having fuelled that tiny flame of hope. Then I set about learning, yet again, to live with Maggie.

With her ideology newly imprinted upon my mind, I decided that as I had already been converted to two major facets of her value system — the creation of a stable family unit and owner occupation — I should set about following the rest of her recipes for success and increased affluence.

Share-ownership was an obvious starting place, but was quickly discarded due to a lack of capital. I would have had to sell the family groceries to buy a few bits of the family silver; not really good housekeeping. Something enterprising, then. A small business? I turned to the small ads and my entrepreneurial career started by advertising four oak chairs (which I'd bought for £16 in a second-hand shop about 10 years before) for £25 in the local paper. They had been well worn since my acquisition, but oak is oak, and there's a big marketplace out there to exploit. So I stayed in all day when the ad. went in and the phone only stopped ringing at ten at night, then started again the next morning. I sold them easily and made £9 profit (minus inflation and £1 for the ad.) and was feeling quite chuffed until the buyer told me (after she'd paid me, of course) that she had seen similar chairs in an antique shop for £180. This initiated my exit from the furniture trade, which I'll only re-enter when I'm a bit more genned up.

Perhaps I wanted it too easy; working harder might be the answer. (At present I work only from 8am to 8pm and vast leisure time is frittered away just filling in cracked plaster and replacing odd roof tiles.)

Childminding? If you've got one, you might as well have two or three (economies of scale?). But, with the going rate locally about 50p an hour, plus the cost of nappies, orange juice, chocolate biscuits and replacing lost dummies, for which I'd be too timid to ask for payment, the idea is not exactly profitable. Even Maggie wouldn't expect me to deprive the kids (would she?).

So I scour the *Sheffield Star* for a conventional job. Lots of commission-only stuff — selling Avon, collecting pools coupons — then, at last, a job to suit. 'Wanted. People to deliver Thompson Local Directories. Need car and telephone.' Good. Not many desperate people fit the latter category, I thought, with my newly acquired dog-eat-dog mentality. I could do it in the evenings, at weekends (with a pushchair?), and it wouldn't have to disrupt the cosy family unit too much. My kid needn't grow up neglected and start mugging old ladies in later life. Maggie would approve.

On August Bank Holiday I was off and, barring the odd unfriendly Doberman, the blackened fingernails from over-sprung letter boxes (have you got one?), the rain, the blistered feet, the over zealous draughtproofing and the crazily numbered council estates, it was a doddle. Forty seven pounds for 16 hours' work — minus petrol, travelling time, loading time and going back to check numbers. Unfortunately, though, there's no more work until next year now and the remuneration was spent at Sainsbury's before I even got the cheque through the post. So now I am back to looking for a new career. Any ideas Maggie? What? Who's Jeffrey Archer? □

WINE

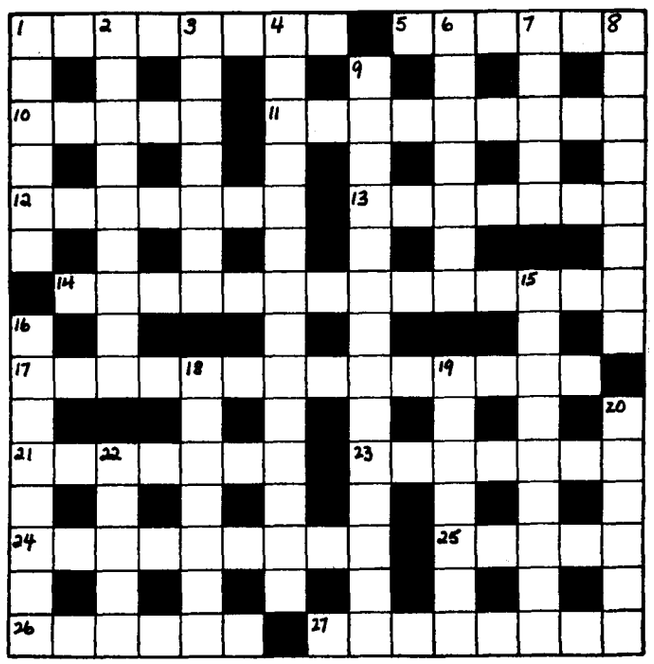
Liquid assets

Stephen Brook

WHEN ON 4 December 1986 a single bottle of wine was sold at Christie's for £36,000, scenes of great excitement ensued. Those of us who successfully ambushed the buyer as he was trying to escape were astonished to discover our prey was a small, unassuming Jordanian, whose cellar was surely supposed to be filled with Lucozade rather

Weekend Crossword 1577

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1577, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 23 November.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

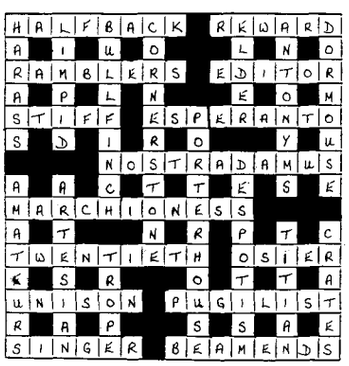
1. The believer shows this is changed by a runner (8)
5. The woodlouse perhaps makes one a little work in the turf (6)
10. To be ill outside the state is an advantage (5)
11. People loving the Latin way take in a boy (9)
12. College in which everyone goes into the beginnings of science (7)
13. A heavenly body follows the sailor (7)
14. Clever boy gets round the lord in good time (6,3,5)
17. An occasion Tupper got confused since these things were on his mind (14)
21. Almost aiming for relief (7)
23. Cure for people holding a strike (7)
24. Good boy caught with a coin in his grasp — how odd! (9)
25. Great cricketer who was all right on water (5)
26. Educationists make expressions of annoyance about gold (6)
27. Fought off the attack when before the finish a fellow goes into action (8)

DOWN

1. Child by a modern artist (6)
2. Magic which makes one pass away without the more skilful one (9)
3. Gripping cricketer (7)
4. Hot-looking athletes or climbers (7,7)
6. English spread themselves about on the beach (8)
7. Queue for a penny drink in France (5)
8. Spoils toy dress badly (7)
9. First object of journalism? (7,7)
15. Tortured about answer, having been thoroughly searched (9)
16. It is obvious that the old man follows another one up (8)
18. He holds an enquiry, discovering nothing in a confined space (7)
19. Something cold makes one feel company breaking up (7)
20. Why brides embrace having different parents (6)
22. Loop which provides good place to sleep (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1575



Prizewinners to 1575

Kenneth Edinborough
(Colchester, Essex)

Dan Pawson
(Edgbaston, Birmingham)

Joyce Anderson
(Stirling)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than great wine. His purchase was a bottle of 1784 Château d'Yquem — one of only two unopened bottles in existence — made even more desirable by the engraved initials 'Th.J.', none other than Thomas Jefferson, the original purchaser two centuries ago.

Wine, like any other commodity, is worth what people are prepared to pay for it. Even so, £36,000 is an obscene sum to pay for six glasses of wine, however magnificent. In recent years rare old wines have frequently been sold for astronomical prices in the auction rooms. It was not always so. Fifteen years ago venerable clarets could be bought quite cheaply, for the sound reason that wine is perishable, and a century-old bottle could be delicious but was more likely to be vinegar.

Few collect old wines for the sake of it, though I learnt of an old lady in Belgium who amassed a superb collection of old wine even though she was a teetotaller herself. Many American collectors like to line up, say, 80 vintages of Château Lafite and then either ask their friends over to taste them all or flog tickets to the event. Surprisingly, the auction houses doubt that rare bottles are bought primarily for speculation.

Christie's may have attracted much welcome publicity from the 1784 Yquem sale, and a handful of others like it, but such occasions are not their bread and butter. Sotheby's wine department reported an increase of turnover of 16 per cent last season, and Christie's don't seem to be hurting either. The mainstay of their business is the sale and resale of mature wines. With extremely high prices being demanded for recent vintages of claret, port and Burgundy, it is not surprising that many buyers turn instead to the auction houses, where mature wines of comparable quality can be bought for the same price as recent wines that won't even be drinkable for a decade. A London auction room will be crowded with merchants who specialise in offering older vintages, especially to the thirsty American and Japanese markets; with a few restaurateurs hoping to plug gaps in their wine list; and private buyers, looking for bargains.

And there are bargains to be had. If a canny merchant is willing to pay £100 for a case of wine, you can be sure he'll add a healthy percentage to the price before it appears on his list. Ports of the great 1977 vintage can be found at auction for about £17 a bottle, about £10 cheaper than the current retail price. However, the pitfalls for the inexperienced buyer are considerable. Many wines are only offered in large quantities. The modest tippler such as myself might welcome a chance to buy a few cheap bottles of a 1970 claret, but not two or more cases of the wine. Then there is the iniquitous premium. Driven, it seems, by pure greed, Sotheby's instituted a 10 per cent premium on the hammer price, which simply means that they help themselves to 10 per cent of the price you have agreed to pay. Christie's at first held out — the head of the wine department, Michael Broadbent, declaring 'Only over my dead body' — and then succumbed. Michael Broadbent is still alive. On many lots VAT is payable as well as the now ubiquitous premium. In such cases the hammer price may be £100, but you'll be invoiced for £127.

There are also risks related to the provenance of the wine. 'A gentleman's cellar in Surrey' doesn't tell you much. The auction houses do check the condition of bottles expected to fetch a high price, but nobody can be certain of the quality of any wine until it's opened. You won't get your money back on 1870 vinegar, even if it does say Château Latour on the label.

Most important of all, don't buy wine primarily for investment. If you can afford it, do buy the extra case at a bargain price; you'll probably sell it at a profit a few years later, and if you're wrong, you can always drink it. In the early 1970s many institutions bought vast quantities of fine wine. The market then collapsed, and the wine had to be unloaded at rock-bottom prices. The string of recent, top-quality, high-priced vintages in Bordeaux means that there are mega-gallons of fine young claret cellared away, much of it bought for investment. The stock market slump has had no immediate effect on the wine market, but it is probable that many investors, anxious to raise capital, will seek to unload their wine. Some will pass to the brokers; other batches will appear at auction. However, a collapse in wine prices is unlikely, for the market is far more broadly based than it was fifteen years ago.

For a few dismal souls, wine is a mere commodity. But, for many, it is one of the great pleasures of life for which we are prepared to pay a just sum. If the investors get their fingers badly burnt in the year ahead, lovers of fine wine will benefit from their discomfort and I for one shall cheer. □

Weekend competition

No 3001 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Victorian parlour verse warned of the horrors of poverty, old age, drink, etc. Can we have extracts from similar verses on the social evils of 1987 — 'Please Sell No More Hash to My Father', for example; or 'On Entering an Old People's Home'; or 'Tell Me, Did My Daddy Drink and Drive?' Max. 12 lines by 25 November. (And, by the way, we omitted to give you a deadline for the Oedipus Competition: it is, as all but the least mathematical among you must have worked out, Wednesday 18 November.)

No 2998 **Set by Gray Dorn**

Lenin's diary for October 1917 as written, not by Alan Brien, but by Jeffrey Archer, Sue Townsend, Jackie Collins or Barbara Cartland.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

It feels like just after a birthday. Last week, everything was jolly because of having reached our 3000th (it's true that there was only me and Ms de M in the building, but the mountain raspberries and Beaumes de Venise went down a treat nonetheless); today, it's as dreary as a sheep's hind legs and there's something like 19 years to go until the next exciting thing happens. Oh dear, I suppose we must just trudge on — and at least you little darlings all seem to be on form, with the Cartland Lenins and Townsend Lenins winning by quite a long chalk. Eight pounds and a copy of Brien's *Lenin: The Novel* (Secker, £11.95) to M.E. Ault, Will Bellenger and Maud Gracechurch.

Wednesday: Kamenev has written to papers. Rotten fink. He say wrong to revolt now and Zinoviev think so too. Wish had not shaved off beard to enter Petrograd. Lie in bed worrying whether beard will grow back in time for big day.

Thursday: Write to papers. Brill reply to Kamenev saying why revolution will not wait. Tee Hee. That show them.

Practise looking important in front of mirror. Try on glasses. Take glasses off again. Do not go with 'Man of Action' image. Do not go with stubble on chin, either.

Friday: Kamenev resign from Central Committee. Zinoviev writes to papers saying he agree with revolution really. Creep. Massage lots of hair oil into chin to make beard grow.

Saturday: Disaster. Stubble not much longer. Now with spots between.

Tuesday: Wrap bandage round chin. Better than shaving off beard again. Travel to Smolny in disguise of wounded person. Ask sentry where they have Trotsky? Sentry say, 'All well. No one have the trotsky here. Ha! Ha!' Denounce sentry for bourgeois sentiment. Sentry denounce me for dirty bandage. Slip in while his back turned.

Thursday: Petrograd has fallen. Hurrah! Best of all my beard is back to normal . . .

M. E. AULT

Wednesday October 11: 4 a.m. O victory! Before dawn's first flush, I have carried the Bolshevik committee, and we are to strike a glorious blow against our cruel, cruel tyrants. 'To arms!' I called, and carried the day. On a scrap of paper ripped from a little book, I entered, my heart palpitating, our union of thoughts.

Tuesday October 17: The sky is black as pitch, and the wind apparently whipped the hat from my head in the passionate dawn, yet, such was my intensity of purpose, I did not heed it. I am thrust through the heart with Zinoviev's deceit.

Wednesday October 18: Ah Kamenev, *tovarich*! He has published an onslaught upon our heady, magnificent dreams of armed struggle, and I must thrust out with my pen to denounce his terrible treachery.

Thursday October 19: Zinoviev has the soul of a weakling, and his moon must be eclipsed.

Monday October 23: Mist in the air, but a sea-breeze in my loins.

Tuesday October 24: Evening. My heart has been black, furious, and I have been driven by inspiration to declare delay to be no more, no less than death.

Wednesday October 25: Rakhia and I arrived at Smolny, sharing a spartan banquet of sausage and cheese. I disguised myself with a bandage (foul but fair!), and a ginger wig, much as a trollop might. Our hearts as high as the flagpole's scarlet signal, as our brave lads and lasses stormed the picturesque palace, I stood in violent fury.

Thursday October 26: The gates of the world citadel lie open! Triumph! And, as the snow falls softly on the city, a happy birthday to Leon . . .

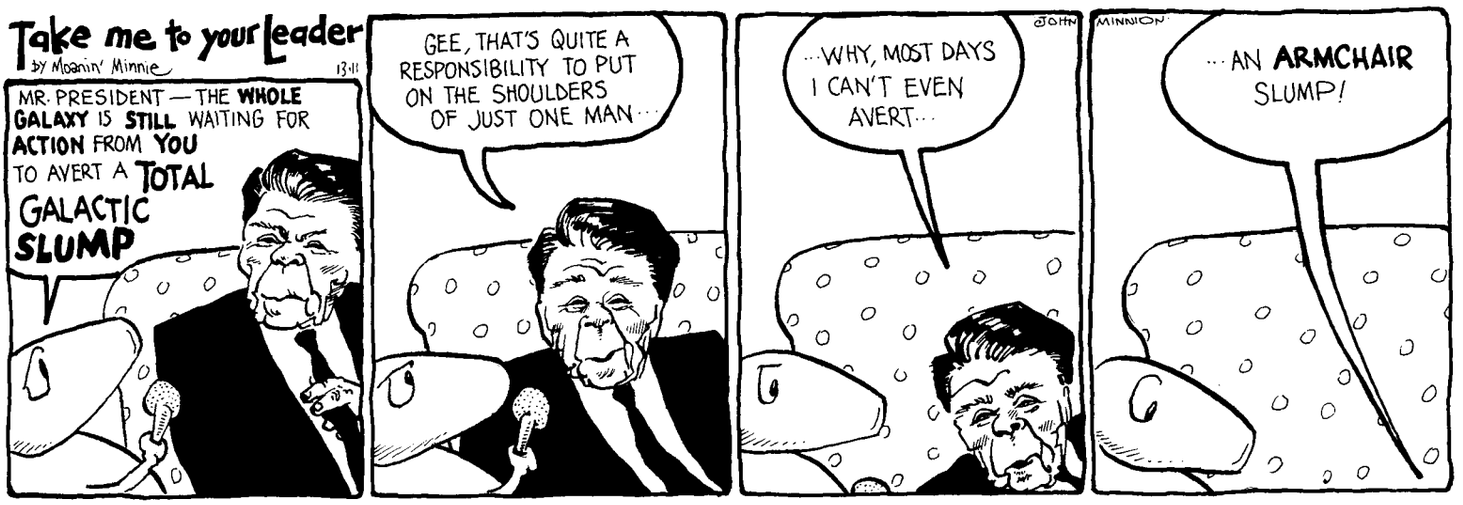
WILL BELLENGER

Oct 1st: Everyone keeps asking when I am going to start the Revolution, but I have decided on a short postponement for what I have called socio-political factors (in other words — spots). I cannot have newspapers printing pictures of me rallying the blood-thirsty mobs at the barricades with spots on my face. So I am growing a beard, and holding a series of meetings with Trotsky, Stalin and others. I reckon my spots will get better once I can stop living in a cellar and move into a palace.

MAUD GRACECHURCH

Incorporating 'The Nation', 'The Athenaeum' and 'The Week-end Review'. Registered as a newspaper. Typesetting by Tocatta Graphics, Tabard House, London SE1
Printed by BPCC Colchester Web Offset Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colchester CO3 3LJ (Tel. 577881), a member company of BPCC Printing Corporation plc.
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co. Ltd at Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


Take me to your Leader
by Moanin' Minnie
MR. PRESIDENT — THE WHOLE GALAXY IS STILL WAITING FOR ACTION FROM YOU TO AVERT A TOTAL GALACTIC SLUMP
GEE, THAT'S QUITE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT ON THE SHOULDERS OF JUST ONE MAN...
...WHY, MOST DAYS I CAN'T EVEN AVERT...
JOHN
MINNION
...AN ARMCHAIR SLUMP!

Chess

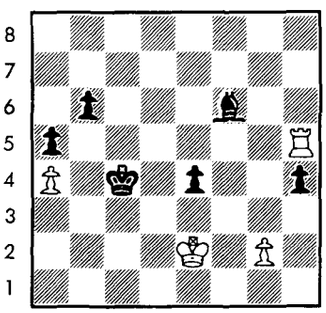
BLACK, WHETHER in the person of champion or of challenger, has been having a lot of trouble in Seville. I find Karpov's opening strategy against the Grünfeld hard to fathom. Yet the champion lost to it in the 5th game and he nearly lost his next Black too:

Karpov-Kasparov, Game 7, 30 October. Grünfeld Defence.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 c5 8. Ne2 Nc6 9. Be3 0-0 10. 0-0 Bg4 11. f3 Na5 12. Bxf7+ Rxf7 13. fxg4 Rxf1+ 14. Kxf1 Qd6 15. e5 Qd5 16. Bf2 Rd8 Only now diverging from 16 . . . Rf8 of the 5th game. First thoughts were best — Black's recipe should be: Rook in the f-file, Queen grips d5-c4, and . . . Bh6. **17. Qe1 Qe4 18. g5 Qf5 19. h4 Nc4 20. Kg1 Qg4 21. a4 h6 22. Ra2!** What a cunning move this is! Karpov plans a long-range strike with his Queen that Kasparov must have underestimated. **hxg5 23. Qb1!** An echo of the Qe1-b1 manoeuvre of the shared brilliancy prize, London 1986 game 11. Karpov threatens 1) Qxg6, 2) Qxb7 — and 3) what follows . . . **gxh4 24. Qb3 Qe6 25. Nf4 Qf7 26. Nxg6! Qxg6 27. Qxc4+ Kh8 28. Rb2** Karpov's venomous subtlety almost carried the day and the white squares, so firmly blockaded in game 5, have all fallen into his hands. **cxd4 29. cxd4 Qg4 30. Qf7 Rxd4!** How much did Kasparov see when he played this move? Hereabouts I cannot help thinking that if Kasparov were White he would find a quick kill. **31. Bxd4 Qxd4+ 32. Rf2 Qxe5 33. Rf5 Qe1+ 34. Rf1 Qe5 35. Kh1 b6 36. Qf4 Qh5 37. Qf5 Qe2 38. Rc1 Bf6 39. Qg6 Qe6 40. Rd1 Qc8** Somehow Black always seems to have a saving resource. For example: 41. Rd5 Qc1+ 42. Kh2 Be5+! 43. Rxe5 Qf4+.

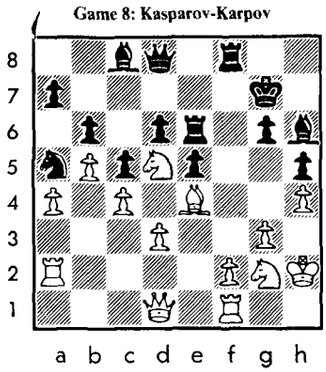
At any rate, Karpov could find nothing better than a manoeuvre to force the exchange of Queens. After a deal of tacking to and fro, the position of the first diagram (*see below, White to play*) was reached. If White is to win he must capture pawns, but this means lifting the blockade on b5: **68. Rh6 Bd4** Not 68 . . . Bd8 69. Rd6 and White wins easily. **69. Rxh4 b5! 70. axb5 a4 71. Rxe4 a3 72. b6 a2 73. Rxd4+ Kxd4 74. b7 a1=Q 75. b8=Q Qa6+ 76. Kf2 Qf6+ 77. Kg1 Ke4 78. Qb4+ Kf5 79. Qe1 Qd4+ ½–½.** A new edition of the old text: the weaker side is able to save the game thanks to a potential outside passed pawn.

But Kasparov's problems with Black seem much more likely to be soluble than Karpov's. Who could have imagined the English Opening would prove so embarrassing for the ex-champion? Apart from game 2, he has restricted himself to passive defence. Game 8 was a particularly abject performance. In the opening Black contracted a permanent inferiority complex, deriving partly from White's hold on d5 and e4, and partly from a misplaced Black Knight on a5. Still, the position was closed and there was no obvious breakthrough for White. Karpov, resolved to sit tight and do nothing, spent the middlegame in time-marking oscillations: . . . Na5-b7-a5, . . . Rb8-e8-b8, and . . . Bg7-h6-g7. It wasn't pretty and it didn't work. Just before the adjournment Kasparov took his chance to open the position up (*see the second diagram*):
42. f4! exf4 Otherwise 43. f5, or if 42 . . . Ree8 43. Raf2. **43. Ngxf4 Re5 44. Nxg6!** A sacrifice justified by the exposure of Black's King and the bystander on a5. **Rxf1 45. Qxf1 Rxe4 46. dxe4 Kxg6 47. Rf2 Qe8** The power of White's attack is seen in the variation 47 . . . Bg7 48. Rf7 Be6 49. Ne7+ Kh7 50. Qf6! Bxf7 51. Qxf7 and Black is completely helpless. **48. e5 dxe5** On 48 . . . Qxe5 there is 49. Re2 and 50. Ne7+. **49. Rf6+ Kg7 50. Rd6 1-0.** Without the pawn on e5 Black could play . . . Qe5, but now there is no remedy against 51. Qf6+. That levelled the scores at 4-4.

Game 7: Karpov-Kasparov



Game 8: Kasparov-Karpov



New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ
Tel: 01-739 3211 (Editorial & Administration)
Telex: 28449/Cables: Newstat, London E2
© 1987 Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd & contributors
Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd
Distributed by NS Distribution

Editor: John Lloyd; **Deputy Editor:** John Rentoul; **Books & Arts Editor:** Harriett Gilbert; **Writers:** Sarah Benton, Duncan Campbell, Jane Dibblin, Rob Edwards (Scotland), Jolyon Jenkins; **Deputy Books & Arts Editor:** Malcolm Imrie; **Poetry Editor:** Hugo Williams; **Production Manager:** Joanne Hurst; **Art Editor:** Vicky Hutchings; **Editorial Assistant:** Jane Thomas

Subscriptions: Cecilia Milton, Joan Scanlon (01-739 1737); **Advertising Director:** Alan Le Coyte; **Display Advertisements:** Laura Berryman, Jennifer Shramenko (01-739 1645); **Classified advertisements:** Carol Anne Brown, Colette O'Reilly (01-739 1645)

Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc. (US Postmaster: Address changes should be sent to New Statesman, Speedimpex USA Inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104)

Unsolicited manuscripts and artwork will only be returned if an SAE is enclosed.

Subscription rates: UK & Eire £40; Europe (air mail only £46); rest of world: air speeded £51; air mail £61. USA: air speeded $70; air mail $85. Canada: air speeded Can $90; air mail Can $115.

This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed.
(Postcards please.)

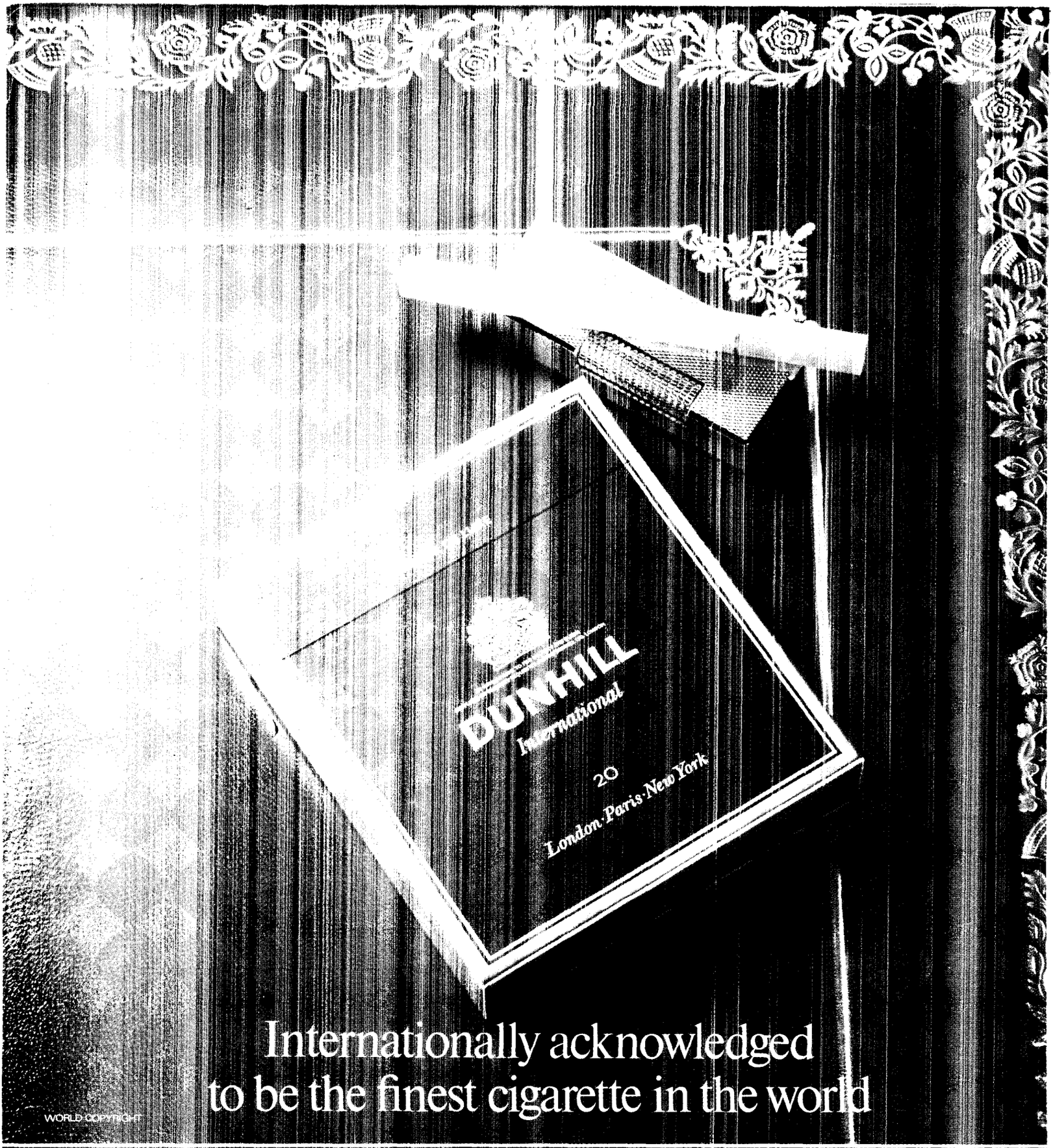
☐ A Hampstead businessman has paid nearly £30,000 for an underground parking space — an eight-foot wide strip that is too short for the Rolls Royce he intends to park there. — *Hampstead Advertiser* (Gregory Tesser)

☐ The working class is to be abolished, statisticians in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys have decided. To ensure social equality the middle and upper classes are being abolished too. 'It has nothing to do with Marxism: it is simply that social class is too useful. It is essential in understanding what is happening in British society.' — *The Times* (Leonard Cox)

☐ A reader who stayed at the George Hotel in Amesbury has sent me the handwritten note he found in his room one evening. It said: 'Sorry that our chambermaid did not make your bed on Monday. She did, however, make it twice on Tuesday to make up. From the Management'. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

☐ A bus company apologised yesterday for a conductor who charged a teddy bear for a ride. Matthew Stevenson, 16, was forced to pay 20p for his 3ft cuddly companion as he took him home from his father's fancy dress shop for two-year-old brother Sam. A company spokesman said 'There must have been confusion over whether a teddy counts as a dog or a child' and offered Matthew, Sam and Teddy free travel for a day. — *Western Morning News* (Patrick Horwood)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Internationally acknowledged to be the finest cigarette in the world

WORLD COPYRIGHT

MIDDLE TAR As defined by H.M. Government

Warning: MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR IN THE UK FROM LUNG CANCER

Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED